

Iraq agrees to rescind annexation of Kuwait and pay reparations but US increases pressure

Allies reject Saddam's latest offer as noose tightens around his forces

By PETER STOTHARD IN WASHINGTON AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE allies yesterday rejected Iraq's latest offer to end the Gulf war, saying that even the unconditional acceptance of all 12 UN resolutions might not be enough to call off the rout of President Saddam Hussein's forces.

The Iraqi foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, has written to the UN asking to rescind the annexation of Kuwait and to pay war reparations in return for a ceasefire and an end to sanctions.

But as the allies tightened the noose around the remnants of Saddam's army, President Bush insisted that the offer still fell far short of what was required. Mr Bush has demanded that Saddam personally and publicly accept all of the resolutions, and yesterday he increased the pressure aimed at achieving an unconditional surrender.

First, the administration signalled that Iraq would have to attend a "settlement meeting" at the UN to clarify some new contentious issues. These are thought to include the return of gold and other hard currency assets looted from Kuwait, and the expansion of the definition of prisoners of war to encompass Kuwaiti detainees seized by the fleeing Iraqi forces.

The White House also said last night that Iraq's post-war military strength must be reduced on the assumption that Saddam would remain in power after the war. There were indications in the allies' seating of the western flank of the war zone that they intended to demilitarise southern Iraq, although there was no intention to take the war to Baghdad.

General Norman Schwarzkopf, the allied commander, said yesterday that allied forces were at one point within 150 miles of the Iraqi capital and could have taken it virtually without opposition had that been a war aim.

General Schwarzkopf said in Riyadh that the Republican Guard divisions in southern Iraq were surrounded. "The gates are closed. There are no ways out," he said. The allied ground offensive had rendered ineffective 29 Iraqi divisions. More than three-quarters of the enemy's 4,000 tanks had been destroyed. Two-thirds of its artillery pieces were gone. More than 50,000 prisoners had been taken.

All of this had been achieved with "miraculously" low casualties. The allies yesterday put the figure at about 90 dead, including nine British soldiers killed by an American attack aircraft on Tuesday.

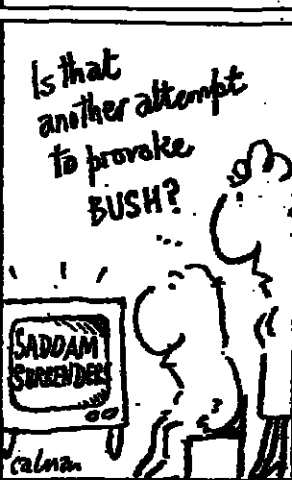
Kuwait City was yesterday declared free as the coalition forces rolled into the city and reclaimed their national embassies. The British ambassador, Michael Weston, will return this week.

Elsewhere in Kuwait, there were only pockets of resistance. But in Iraq, hundreds of tanks from the US 7th Armoured Corps were involved in fierce fighting with a Republican Guard tank division that tried to break through an allied cordon and flee northwards. At least 57 Iraqi T72 tanks had been destroyed in the clashes west of Basra, American defence officials said.

Other officials said British, French and American armoured units were also fighting Republican Guard divisions on a long-curved front from a point west-southwest of Basra into Kuwait.

Baghdad radio yesterday said the enemy coalition had "interfered in the withdrawal of our forces" and demonstrated all his cowardly, mean and lowly characteristics while trying to harm our units. The complaint came as it broadcast the details of Mr Aziz's letter to the UN, which said that Iraq would give up its

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claim to Kuwait and release all prisoners of war in a short time once a ceasefire was declared and all allied and sea operations were halted.

The Iraqi ambassador to the UN, Abdul al-Anbari, said in New York that Iraq was willing to comply with all remaining security council resolutions. The last soldier had left Kuwait at dawn, he said, so that those resolutions imposing sanctions were no longer necessary. It was up to the security council to rescind those, he said.

He rejected suggestions that the offer was conditional, saying: "Unless you are alive you cannot walk, so don't tell me that it's a condition to be alive in order to walk. You cannot implement resolutions without a ceasefire."

Mr al-Anbari said he was asking for a security council meeting to declare a ceasefire, but that meeting was delayed last night while members awaited a proper translation of Mr Aziz's letter. The State Department in Washington said, however, that all five permanent members of the security council had agreed that the latest offer was inadequate.

The White House spokesman, Martin Fitzwater, said that President Bush wanted the shooting to stop as soon as militarily possible, "but this is still a conditional offer and falls far short of what is necessary."

Washington is determined that the resolutions retaining sanctions on Iraq be maintained. The power to curb Saddam's post-war ability to buy arms is considered critical. Future security arrangements were at the centre of talks yesterday between Mr Bush and the British foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd. The president's meetings with the French and German foreign ministers later this week are also expected to address the post-war period.

The White House said that its aim was to reduce the post-war military strength of Iraq. "Assuming that Saddam Hussein stays in power, and assuming the UN resolutions are met, that would require we continue this effort to degrade his military structure," Mr Fitzwater said. Pentagon officials said that the pursuit and destruction of the Iraqi army would continue.



For this relief: a Kuwaiti citizen raising his arms in celebration yesterday as a Saudi personnel carrier rolls into a liberated Kuwait City

How we won the war, by General Schwarzkopf

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

GENERAL Norman Schwarzkopf, the US commander-in-chief in the Gulf, announced last night that there were just two Republican Guard divisions left to deal with after three days of the land campaign to liberate Kuwait.

After a massive flanking manoeuvre, carried out while the Iraqis were expecting an amphibious landing from the opposite direction, Iraq's armoured capability had been almost eliminated. All that remained in Iraq were infantry divisions, he said, which would not pose the same threat to the region in the future.

General Schwarzkopf, in his most outspoken briefing so far, gave a tour d'horizon of

the land campaign. He admitted that if he had thought the battle would have lasted such a short time he would never have provided the Operation Desert Storm forces with 60 days' supplies.

He dismissed President Saddam Hussein's leadership, saying that he was no good at tactics, he had not been schooled in the "operational art" and he was neither a general nor a soldier.

He also said Iraqi soldiers had not put up a fight because they did not have a cause to believe in, nor a leader they followed. When execution squads were sent to the front line to shoot soldiers who tried to desert, that gave a clear indication that the Iraqi

leadership had failed. General Schwarzkopf said the American, British and French divisions had cut off all escape for Iraq's army. "The gates are closed... there are no ways out," he said.

Five Republican Guard divisions had been confronted. One had been put out of action and two more would be in that position by yesterday, he said. That left two more divisions. General Schwarzkopf said he was not trying to destroy the Republican Guard, he just wanted their tanks and equipment.

Constant psychological operations were being conducted to try to persuade the Republican Guards to leave their tanks. If they fought on, however, they would be attacked, he said.

The general also emphasised that it was not his mission to conquer Iraq or to go to Baghdad. At one stage, US 101st Airborne Division troops had been within 150 miles of Baghdad and they could have headed unopposed to the capital. "There was no one between us and Baghdad," General Schwarzkopf said. However there was no intention of going to Baghdad.

Giving the first detailed briefing of the allied strategy, he said the Iraqis had been fooled into believing a major amphibious assault on Kuwait was planned. Other troops were positioned directly south of Kuwait to make the Iraqis think the main assault would come from there.

Once the Iraqi air force had been neutralised and could no longer see the allied units, they were moved west where they could outflank Iraq's defensive barrier in southern Kuwait. Allied units then launched long-range flanking

Nine Britons die in 'friendly fire'

By OUR DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

NINE British soldiers killed in the first tank battle involving the Desert Rats, died in a "friendly fire" incident after being hit by anti-tank shells launched from an American A10 Thunderbolt.

The A10 had been called in by the British 1st Armoured Division to provide extra firepower as they took on an Iraqi division about 50 miles into Iraq, west of Wadi al-Batin.

The soldiers were in two Warrior infantry fighting vehicles when they came under fire from the plane. Colonel Barry Stevens, the British military spokesman in Riyadh said the men died "in the heat of battle". The Warriors carried clear identification markings, which were supposed to prevent attacks by friendly aircraft. "They cannot be mistaken," Colonel Stevens said.

An investigation is being carried out to discover how the A10 crew launched an attack on the two British Warriors. There was a similar "friendly" attack by an American Apache helicopter on a US armoured combat vehicle during the battle for Khafji in Saudi Arabia several weeks ago. Seven marines were killed.

The nine British soldiers, including Private Conrad Cole, aged 17, of the Queen's Regiment, were among 13 killed and ten wounded in the battle.

Major keen on June poll

The prime minister is keen to seek a fresh mandate in a June general election, close associates have disclosed. They expect Mr Major to assess the Tory performance in the May local elections before making a decision. Page 22

Carey retracts

Dr George Carey, Archbishop-designate of Canterbury, above, has retracted his declaration that "the idea that only a male can represent Christ at the altar is a most serious heresy". Page 8

Study attacked

A scientific study claiming that children's intelligence can be improved by vitamin pills was criticised by experts as the pills were launched in British shops. Page 7

Pretoria clash

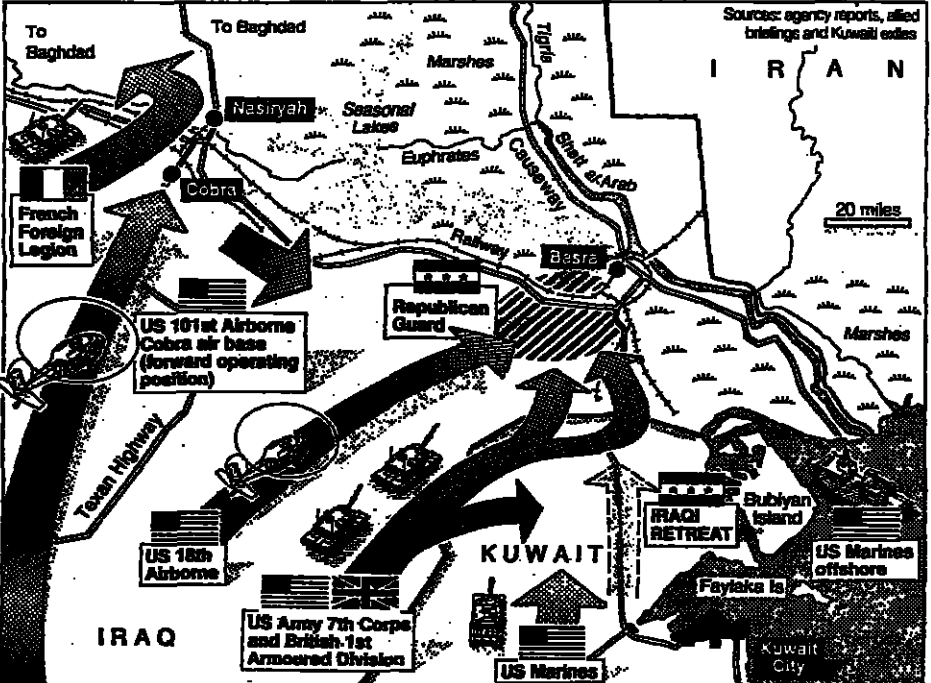
Right-wing extremists, angered by the detention of fellow activists, have clashed with police around Pretoria's central prison. Page 11

Base rate cut

Hopes of a further cut in interest rates spread through the City yesterday after the government sanctioned a cut in bank base rates. Page 22

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Closing in on the Republican Guard: with Kuwait City now retaken, the French guard the west flank while American and British forces drive north and east

Businessman who stayed on tells of atrocities

FROM STEWART PAYNE IN KUWAIT CITY

AMID scenes of wild jubilation and cheering crowds, Geoff French, a British businessman, yesterday described his 210 days in Kuwait City under Iraqi occupation. "Whatever you have heard about Iraqi atrocities is true," he said.

"The soldiers have brutalised the people of this city, sometimes beating them, sometimes beating them, sometimes killing them. It would depend on a whim or whether you could bribe your way out."

Mr French, aged 40 from Portsmouth, who ran a computer consultancy in Kuwait City until the invasion, was one of only 27 British subjects who have remained here throughout the occupation. He said: "I chose to stay. I have been here for

12 years and have had some very good times and made some very good friends. It didn't seem fair to desert them at this time."

He said that at first the Iraqi invasion was treated "a bit like a phoney war". Although his business had been forced to shut, he was able to move around fairly freely. "But then they introduced the hostage nonsense and everything changed. Along with 25 other British people, most of them women and children, we went into hiding. We couldn't have done it without our Arab friends. They were marvellous, very brave."

Mr French, who is single, said that they were smuggled into a Kuwaiti man's house wearing Arab clothing. "When the Iraqis said that women and children could leave, our number was reduced to eight, all men. Finally, when men were allowed to leave as

well, the others went home. But I stayed on."

He said that life under the Iraqis varied. Sometimes he felt free to walk around, and others he spent long, tedious days in hiding. His own home was looted by the Iraqis, although his office survived intact. But he said there was plenty of evidence to support the claims that the Iraqi soldiers killed many Kuwaitis.

"They would round them up, just to strike fear into them as a means of controlling them. They would take them to the football stadium or the police station and beat them up. Sometimes, if their families came along and bribed their captors, they would let them go. At other times, they would kill them and dump the bodies in the street."

After the allied bombings, things got worse and as the ground war

loomed, the Iraqis began a campaign of rounding up men in their late teens and twenties. "As recently as last Friday a Kuwaiti friend of mine was walking with his girlfriend when he was dragged away. No one has heard of him since."

Mr French said that the air war was welcomed. "Everyone was on the rooftops cheering the bombers in. We never saw them, but we could see and hear the devastation they were causing on the outskirts of the city. Many of us felt that the air war was long overdue. The sanctions nonsense just wasn't working. It was a joke."

He produced a can of beer, manufactured in Jordan. "It's ironic, isn't it? Alcohol is banned here and yet you can still get it, even with sanctions on. Lorry-loads of supplies were coming in from Jordan each day. He will stay

Continued on page 22, col 7

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LIBERATION

Troops come home in triumphant mood past Iraqi corpses

By NICHOLAS WATT AND RAY CLANCY

THE Kuwaiti army returned home in triumph yesterday, rolling past corpses of Iraqi troops and cheered on by crowds weeping with joy amid thunder and lightning across a sky darkened from burning oil fields.

American troops ringed the city while US marines won control of the airport after fierce tank battles. British and American troops did, however, go into the city to secure their embassies.

The marines seized the international airport outside Kuwait City after a 24-hour battle that destroyed more than 100 Iraqi tanks, according to a senior American defence department official. The marines, reinforced by US army mechanised forces and other coalition units, fought elements of Iraq's 3rd Armoured Division for the airport.

Kuwaiti resistance fighters rounded up their former captors and banded them to the coalition forces. Resistance fighters said that 4,000 Iraqi soldiers had been captured in the 24 hours to last night, virtually ridding the capital of the occupying forces.

Amid the excitement of liberation, one Kuwaiti nearly

set himself alight in his haste to set fire to a large portrait of President Saddam Hussein in the city. Groups of Kuwaitis raced their sports cars in and out of military convoys and the normally shy women of the liberated emirate shrieked at the tops of their voices.

Pockets of Iraqi soldiers crouched beside roads in Kuwait City, guarded by American and Kuwaiti troops, as columns of tanks and armoured vehicles swept by like a carnival parade. One forgotten Iraqi ran alongside a convoy, frantically signalling that he wanted to be captured.

The roads were littered with Iraqi soldiers' boots and helmets, discarded during their desperate flight north. Iraqi bodies lay scattered under blankets. One soldier lay sprawled face up on the road, legs buckled, anguish still written across his face.

Hundreds of wrecked cars, burnt-out tanks and armoured vehicles littered the highway as the Shahid (martyr) brigade of the Kuwaiti army drove into town. They had spent the night with Saudi forces on the outskirts of the city.

Wives ran to husbands they had not seen for months, brothers embraced and par-

ents with tears coursing down their cheeks welcomed home sons. Cars carrying pictures of the emir, Sheikh Jaber Ahmed al-Sabah, and Crown Prince Sheikh Saad al-Sabah, weaved dangerously among British, American and Soviet-made tanks rumbling into the city centre.

Battle-weary US marines and infantrymen, some clearly moved at the spectacle, waved on the Kuwaitis. "We were here to protect them and help them out," Sergeant Steve Dodkin, aged 25, of Charleston, Indiana, said as he stood beside his Bradley fighting vehicle.

In Britain, exiled Kuwaitis shed tears of joy as they recognised relatives from television pictures, the first confirmation for many months that their families were alive and well despite the Iraqi atrocities and killings.

Mousa Mohammed, one of the volunteers at the headquarters of the Free Kuwait Campaign in London, said: "I thought my cousin looked strange at first because he had grown a beard, but it was him, he looked happy and was celebrating. It made me want to go back right away."

He gave details for the first time of the way messages were sent by a secret army of men from occupied Kuwait City to London. They were broadcast on a shortwave radio transmitter to Sweden where Kuwaiti exiles fixed them on to London. Five people risked their lives to send the messages. The information was gathered by a group of resistance workers.

News of the Iraqi atrocities first emerged from these clandestine messages which also provided information about the strength of Iraqi forces and the extent of damage to buildings and roads. No more are expected as the equipment has been commandeered by the authorities in Kuwait.

However, others were worried by reports of thousands being taken away by the retreating Iraqi soldiers. A British woman, whose Kuwaiti husband has been caught up in the war, said she was desperate for any news. Jayne Fayrouz, aged 30, who is living with her parents in Mold, Clwyd, has not seen her husband since she left Kuwait in June to return home to give birth to her second child, Paris, who was born three days before the Iraqi invasion.

She has had four letters smuggled out from her husband, Faisal, a marine fire officer, whose job was to patrol oil tankers along the coast, but nothing has arrived since January.

Many Kuwaitis believe the Iraqi soldiers responsible for the rapes, tortures and killings should be brought to justice. Jassem Muhammad, a Kuwaiti MP who was elected to the National Council two months before the invasion but managed to escape to Britain, said there should be no hiding place for those who committed atrocities. Of Saddam he said: "He's a person who has no values. He's not even civilised, his behaviour is inhuman. He's neither a Muslim nor an Arab."

However, he thought the allies should stop short of pursuing Saddam inside Iraqi borders. He hoped that the Iraqi leader would be brought to trial by his people, but warned that if he was not handed to the coalition, he risked being lynched.

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GOVERNMENT

Emirate facing conflict over democratic rule

By MICHAEL KNIFE, DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

AS IT returns to normality, Kuwait faces the danger of being caught between pressure from the West to expand political democracy and from its Arab neighbours to curtail reforms.

The declaration of martial law by Sheikh Jaber Ahmed al-Sabah, the exiled emir, on Tuesday, in the wake of the reported withdrawal of Iraqi forces, sent shivers of concern through pro-democracy activists in the exiled Kuwaiti community. They regard martial law as the thin edge of the wedge that will enable the al-Sabah family to reassert its grip on Kuwait and its control over the emirate's vast oil revenues and extensive international investments.

"The Sabah family don't want to share power," Ahmed al-Khatib, a veteran left-wing activist and former national assembly deputy, said. He contends that there are about 650 adult males in the ruling family, about sixty of whom are the sons of the emir. This group and a few thousand acolytes, he says, hold the real power and have no intention of allowing it to be diluted by democracy.

This is strongly dismissed as a minority view by many of the Kuwaitis who have been campaigning for the emirate's liberation. "Political reforms were under way, recommended by the government and supported by the people," said Dr Jaafar Behbehani, a clinical psychologist and official of the Association for a Free Kuwait, a patriotic pressure group which is said to be independent of the Kuwaiti government-in-exile.

Only a day before the emir's martial law announcement, Dr Behbehani pointed out, the Kuwaiti ruler undertook that demands for greater public participation in government would be incorporated in a

proposed national charter for the emirate.

The emir's promise was seen by many as the price demanded by the West for re-establishing the al-Sabah family's constitutional authority.

In contrast, most of the Arab states in the multinational alliance already regard Kuwait's relatively advanced political system with distinct unease. The other tribal autocracies of the Gulf, and Saudi Arabia in particular, fear that if activists in the emirate succeed in winning greater reforms their success will spawn unwelcome democracy movements.

Kuwait claims a long history of democracy, and until five years ago had the freest press in the Arab world. Although out of a population of 800,000 only 65,000 males over 21, who can trace their citizenship to before 1920, have the vote, the emirate has the distinction of being the only one of the six Arab Gulf states to have an elected parliament.

Six national assemblies have been elected since independence in 1961. They provided a platform for politicians ranging from radical pan-Arabist socialists to Islamic fundamentalists. In 1985 opponents of the government in the 50-seat assembly had a ten-seat majority.

This parliament was dissolved by the emir at the height of the Iran-Iraq war a year later. The official reason was Kuwait's sensitive neutrality in the war, although many believe the involvement of members of the royal family in a serious financial scandal was the real cause.

Leading article, page 13



Jubilant: a resident of Kuwait City, top, waving the national flag at a Kuwaiti army tank; centre, men dancing on the roof of a police station outside the capital as an American soldier keeps watch; and a woman giving the traditional greeting to welcome visitors, sprinkling perfumed water on the hands of a US embassy guard

DIPLOMATIC TIES

British envoys to revisit embassy

By OUR DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Weston, the British ambassador to Kuwait, and the last Western ambassador to leave the occupied emirate, flew to Riyadh yesterday and is expected to reopen the embassy in Kuwait today.

Mr Weston endured a 111-day siege without water or electricity facilities before leaving the embassy compound in mid-December. He will be one of the first diplomats to return and he is being accompanied by Barry Lowen, a second secretary.

When he departed in December, Mr Weston left the building secure with the British flag flying over the compound. The Foreign Office emphasised at the time that

the government was not bowing to Baghdad's demand that diplomats be withdrawn and said the embassy remained open in the formal sense.

British officials were uncertain yesterday about conditions in the compound although one said "as far as is known the embassy is still standing". The two diplomats will be taken from Riyadh by the British military and they are expected to rely on them initially for provisions.

Mr Weston will stay in Kuwait City only briefly. Until the Kuwaiti government-in-exile makes a formal return to the city, he will join them at their administrative headquarters in Saudi Arabia.

REPARATIONS

Kuwait may demand oil as it rebuilds own industry

FROM REUTERS IN PARIS

KUWAIT will not be able to produce oil for nine months and may demand Iraqi oil as part of war reparations, according to Sheikh Salem Abdul-Aziz al-Saud al-Sabah, governor of its central bank.

As allied armies ended Iraq's eight-month occupation of Kuwait City, the central bank governor told *Le Monde*, the French daily, that nearly 650 of the country's 900 oil wells had been set ablaze by Iraqi troops. "We do not know how long it will take to put them out and restart production. I do not think it will restart for nine months," he said.

Kuwait would demand war reparations from Iraq stag-

gered over an undefined period and they could be made in the form of oil. "Iraq is a very rich country. We are not asking for immediate repayment but staggered over time... They can easily produce 2.5 million barrels per day... discussions on the form reparations are to take will be held in due course," he said.

The distribution of contracts to rebuild the shattered emirate was well advanced, he said. Reflecting US military dominance in the coalition to free Kuwait, he said American companies had been granted the majority of contracts for an urgent rebuilding phase. British firms had been granted 22 per cent of the contracts

and other allied nations would also be given projects.

The Soviet Union, which supported United Nations demands against Iraq but did not commit any forces, would also be awarded contracts to rebuild the country, Tarek Razouki, the Kuwaiti ambassador to France, said.

Two French ministers were due to leave Paris today for talks with Kuwaiti leaders on postwar reconstruction of the emirate, he added. Mr Razouki said that Michel Charasse, the budget minister, and Thierry de Beaucourt, the junior foreign minister, would meet Sheikh Jaber Ahmed al-Sabah, the emir, and other Kuwaiti leaders.

Political and economic challenges await on road to recovery

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR



Yamani: forecast an oil glut and sharply falling prices

THE liberation of Kuwait poses enormous challenges for the world. The allies must immediately clear the country and capital of mines, weapons, burnt-out tanks and street barricades. They must set up an interim administration to hold together the ravaged country.

They must also decide what to do with suspected collaborators and non-Kuwaitis who now risk violent revenge. And they must begin the colossal task of reconstruction, repairing buildings and getting basic services, such as water, electricity and sewage, functioning before allowing exiles to return.

The restoration of the exiled government and the return of the ruling al-Sabah family is a first priority. This potent political symbol was a condition laid down

by the United Nations, and recognition of the emir's rule by Iraq must be explicit before the allies agree to a ceasefire.

But the Kuwaiti government has already announced that martial law will be imposed until enough order can be restored to permit a civilian administration. The Western allies have repeatedly declared that they will not set up a permanent presence in the region. But such is the scale of destruction and the enormity of the clean-up that only an operation on a military scale will be able to make Kuwait City habitable.

The US Army Corps of Engineers has signed a 90-day contract to carry out the initial phase of reconstruction. Other allied engineers may also be invited to stay on until the military administration. So far British companies have received contracts worth only \$46 million (£24 million). Military engineers have already

The government of Kuwait is faced with the daunting task of repairing the war's ravages and making a devastated land habitable, Michael Binyon reports

begun making Kuwait safe for its inhabitants. This will mean removing hundreds of thousands of mines, demolishing dangerous buildings that have been blown up or set on fire, and extinguishing the oil fires at the well-heads.

Kuwait City has also been torn up by barricades, booby-traps from the roads must be removed and the barricades that were erected in anticipation of house-to-house fighting must be dismantled. Looted hospitals must be re-equipped and sewage and desalination plants repaired. Water is critically short and, with only limited supplies from desert wells, floating desalination plants may

be moored for some months off the coast.

Equipment, generators and supplies are now being brought in by lorry from Saudi Arabia. A priority will be the repair of telephone links, so that people abroad can find out whether their families are safe. Exiles will not be allowed to return until housing can be repaired and municipal services are running again.

More urgently, the government will round up any Iraqis who were brought to settle in Kuwait after the invasion. Most have left to escape the anger of the mobs, but there are fears some may attempt to pass themselves off as long-

time residents. The last Kuwaiti census, now under the guard of the United Nations, will be used to check the pre-invasion population.

The government has announced that it will not allow most of the foreign workers who fled after the invasion to return. Sulaiman Mutawa, the minister of planning, said recently that Kuwait would adopt a new population policy, so that never again would there be seven foreign workers for every three Kuwaitis. A more urgent issue is what to do with the Palestinians and others who stayed during the occupation. Some are accused of collaboration and of looting Kuwaiti property, but others joined the resistance. There may be strong popular pressure to expel all of them, but the international community is sure to press the military authorities for proper investigations and hearings. Identification of war

criminals will be a priority. President Bush has promised that they will face individual prosecution.

The reconstruction of Kuwait is now estimated to take at least 10 years. The cost was put at about \$50 billion (£26.1 billion) a week ago, but since the destruction of the oil wells this could now double. With more than 500 wells burning, Kuwait is losing an estimated \$100 million a day. Until the fires can be extinguished and the installations repaired, the flow of oil cannot begin. This will severely hamper Kuwait's ability to restart using its oil wealth. The allies will move swiftly to lift the United Nations embargo on Kuwaiti oil, but there will soon be a glut on the market. Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the former Saudi oil minister, forecast in a lecture in London earlier this week that oil prices would fall to about \$12 a barrel when Kuwaiti oil came on stream.

'The sky rained fire and the earth heaved beneath me'



Philip Jacobson, with the 32nd Field Regiment in Iraq, describes a night made dreadful by battle

A LONG column of Iraqis trudges out of the driving rain just after dawn, heads bowed, hands high. They walk like men emerging from a nightmare, and there is every reason for that.

A few hours earlier, I watched as a terrifying barrage of artillery fell upon the position these troops occupied around an artesian well. For almost 40 minutes, the sky rained fire upon them: salvo after salvo of heavy shells and volleys of long-range rockets lit up the dark almost continuously, with sudden blossoms of bright red flame marking one hit after another.

From where I was lying at the side of a Desert Rat command vehicle just over a mile away, the flashes were blinding and the earth literally heaved beneath me. As shells passed overhead with a noise like someone tearing heavy canvas, the air pressure changed perceptibly. Then came the double boom of impact and percussion wave, like the slamming of a heavy door.

The thought of being under that hail of shrapnel and high explosive was quite atrocious: several of the young British soldiers who had joined me to watch this extraordinary and, it must be admitted, riveting spectacle, caught their breath and swore quietly, unceasingly aware of what torment their enemies were enduring.

When the barrage lifted, a ground attack by Challenger tanks and infantry went in

immediately, designed to exploit the numbing effect of the bombardment. The sky lit up again, this time with long streamers of red tracer rounds drifting lazily into the Iraqi position.

Machineguns were hammering incessantly and we heard the deep thump of Milan anti-tank rockets seeking Iraqi armour. We could follow the course of the battle on radio links in our signals vehicle; the voice of Brigadier Patrick Cordingley, commander of the Desert Rats, was on the air continuously, pressing this unit to get a move on towards a new objective, cautioning another not to get carried away before securing an enemy gunpit.

A flurry of traffic would indicate that a new attack was under way, yet virtually every voice was calm and composed, even when the first of the British casualties was brought in. Severely wounded, he was rushed to a nearby aid post and treated before being evacuated to a more sophisticated hospital.

Shortly before dawn, another prolonged artillery attack was begun and the earth began shaking again. It was the last straw for the Iraqis, who appear to have laid down their weapons where they stood and set off in search of someone to accept their surrender.

That was when we came across them, being rounded up by a handful of bewildered gunners from 32nd Field Regiment. "They just



Trench warfare: a British infantryman with 4th Armoured Brigade lobbing a grenade into an Iraqi position in the desert yesterday

loomed up out of the rain and stood looking at us," Staff Sergeant David Seaman explained, gesturing to the POWs now sitting quietly on the sand and whispering among themselves. "A lot of them looked dazed, punch-drunk maybe, and they stood there while we searched them for weapons without saying a word."

Most of the prisoners were shivering with cold, at least one had no boots. Within minutes, a new pair of British army issue was produced, plus cakes, chocolate bars and cigarettes. David Seaman handed out what was left of his wife's last parcel. "The war's over for them now and I have nothing against these lads, in fact I'm delighted they turned it in instead of getting killed."

The regimental sergeant

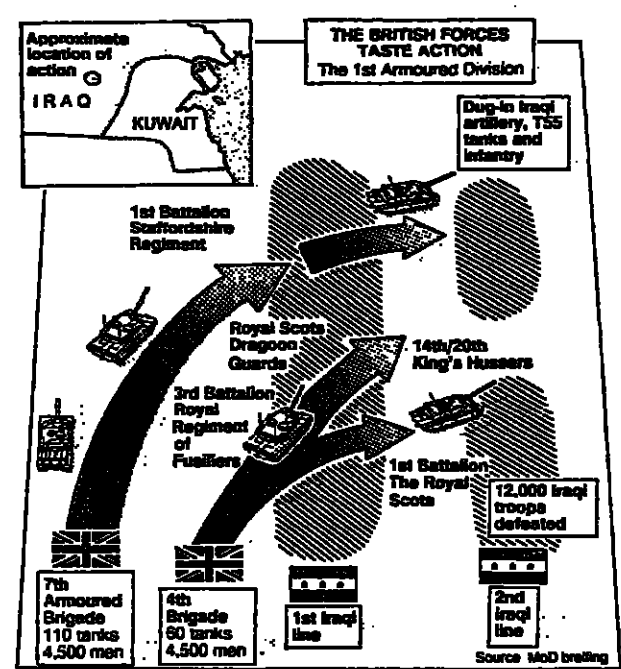
major, David Hill, took me over to a handful of officers segregated from the rest. One young captain spoke passable English, explaining that his unit had surrendered because there was no longer hope of escape.

"British army good men?" he asked me, and I assured him that all the POWs were safe and would be decently treated. An older man said something in Arabic: "He told me to say to you that this is the second time he is prisoner of war, and he knows the British are kinder than the Iranians."

By the time our column was under way again, the Challenger tanks of the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars and the Scots Dragoon Guards grinding on towards their next objectives. Our own vehicle, named The Whore of Babylon by some-

one who knew his Book of Revelations, could not keep pace, as Brigadier Cordingley's exhortations crackled out over the radio. He seemed to be in a good mood, joking with one officer who had reported the capture of "a dozen soldiers and a major from Iraqi Ordnance" that Ordnance majors consider themselves quite important chaps. On the way up to the new frontline, we passed elderly T-55 tanks dug in by the Iraqis for use as artillery, some abandoned without damage, others blackened by direct hits.

The artillery was forming up again. Soon it would be another Iraqi unit of cold, hungry and dispirited men absorbing the fearsome bombardment. Let us hope they would also have the good sense to surrender.



Border corps paves way

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

THE American VII Corps made the opening for the biggest British armoured assault since El Alamein by smashing through the sand berms, mines and barbed wire entanglements laid by the Iraqis as a first line of defence along their border with Saudi Arabia.

After a 30-minute artillery barrage, in which more explosives were used than in the 1942 desert battle in which their predecessors had earned their nickname of "Desert Rats", the Americans drove through to create a bridgehead inside Iraqi territory with troops and armour deployed in a circle to ward off any counter-attack.

Then 2,500 armoured vehicles and Land Rovers from the British 1st Armoured Division poured in through the lanes in the minefields.

Once the first objective had been reached the second brigade, the 7th in the division, was brought into the attack, swinging right into Kuwait to attack other Iraqi units. The 14th/20th King's Hussars and the 3rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers smashed through an infantry brigade taking countless prisoners, while the Royal Scots took on an enemy artillery battery.

The sporadic counter attacks were quickly beaten off.

ALLIED ADVANCE

Schwarzkopf runs rings around Republican Guard

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE trapping of the Republican Guard in southern Iraq, blocking off their escape route and forcing them to fight or surrender was the coup de grace envisaged by General Norman Schwarzkopf, the allied commander, when he drew up his blueprint for liberating Kuwait.

But even he could not have expected so rapid a conclusion to his strategy. The encirclement of President Saddam Hussein's best equipped forces appears to have been achieved in less than 72 hours from the moment the allied land offensive was launched at 4am local time on Sunday.

The speed of the advance and the collapse of the Iraqi resistance in Kuwait itself forced Saddam yesterday to go for the only option left if he wanted to save his Republican Guard from annihilation or humiliation: total acceptance of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, including recognition of Kuwait as Kuwait, instead of Iraq's 19th province. Saddam's "surrender" to the demands of the security council was still not the final word. But his implicit admission of defeat was only brought about because the allies kept up the military pressure.

The Schwarzkopf plan, which has brought the conflict to possibly the most critically

balanced stage between war and diplomacy, was dependent on a number of factors. First, the breaching of Iraqi defensive positions in southern Kuwait and southern Iraq had to be completed, so efficiently that once allied armour began to thrust forward through the mine-cleared gaps, the momentum could be maintained, not just because of the fear of an Iraqi artillery or chemical attack, but also because passing armoured divisions with their logistical support through a breach in defences is a complex process. Each division had a separate, though linked, objective, which could not be pursued if armour, infantry and supplies became mixed up.

Second, the Iraqis had to be kept guessing. Deception tactics, principally involving the US 1st Cavalry Division which kept on charging at the Iraqi positions across the Kuwaiti border, were used to persuade the enemy that the main American thrust was going to come 100 miles east of where it took place.

After spending so many months dug down in defensive positions, it was impossible for the Iraqis to respond to the real threat when it came. The mobility and manoeuvrability of the US, British and French divisions, in particular, helped to outsmart them. While expecting the main allied axis to come through the centre of the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, the principal thrusts were made to the west and east.

Third, a forward base was needed in southwest Iraq in order to block the main Basra to Baghdad supply route, to threaten the Republican Guard from the rear, and to provide a fuel and maintenance site for the US, British and French armoured di-

visions as they swept up through Iraq to encircle the guard, spread out over an area about ten miles by 15 miles south west of Basra.

This was the boldest of General Schwarzkopf's moves. When first reports emerged of a leapfrog by 300 transport and assault helicopters of the US 101st Airborne Division on Sunday to a spot about half way to the Euphrates river, the impression was that the Americans had set up an ad hoc refuelling site in the middle of the desert, somewhere near Nasiriyah, 175 miles south of Baghdad.

In fact, the 101st had seized an Iraqi air base, thus meeting the three objectives demanded by General Schwarzkopf. The base is now being used as the

key allied refuelling and helicopter-strike launch point for the attack on the Republican Guard. Fourth, assuming the main allied axis succeeded in overrunning the Iraqi positions in Iraq, west of Wadi al-Batin, the objective was to continue as rapidly as possible northwards to complete the trap around the Republican Guard.

The French Operation Daguet division were to be the first to reach the 101st base, so that they could take up a position on the Nasiriyah to Baghdad road.

The Republican Guard's back is blocked by the Tigris river, without any bridges for retreat. The only escape route, by road due north through Basra, is too narrow. The encirclement is thus complete.



Rifle range: hundreds of enemy weapons displayed by French troops in the Iraqi town of Salman yesterday

RECONSTRUCTION

Baghdad electricity 'hit for year'

FROM REUTERS IN BAGHDAD

IRAQ will need at least a year to restore electricity supplies to Baghdad because of severe bomb damage, a senior Iraqi engineer said yesterday.

Thakir Ismail al-Qubaisi said American-led air raids in the first week of the war had destroyed all ten of the Iraqi capital's substations, used to distribute power to Baghdad's 4.5 million inhabitants. Although there was no independent confirmation that all substations had been knocked out, two shown to correspondents had been reduced to rubble with burnt-out control rooms and twisted pylons.

Mr al-Qubaisi said two units, at Yarmouk in western Baghdad and al-Waziriyah in the north, had served 900,000 people as well as factories and

hospitals. "The damage is severe. Nothing can be repaired, just look at it," he said of the Yarmouk plant. The sound of exploding bombs were heard in the distance as he spoke.

Mr al-Qubaisi, who is responsible for substations, said he could not estimate the cost of restoring power supplies and buying replacement equipment. "Prices have gone up since these substations were built. As for the time needed, I would say one year." Iraq was a net electricity exporter before the Gulf confrontation. Its national power grid has been either shut down or damaged in raids. Delays in restoring electricity are likely to have a big impact on the resumption of industrial activity.

What little generating capacity re-

mains in Baghdad is now used to pump water to residents for just two hours a day. The health ministry says the serious shortage of treated water and the inability to process raw sewage mean epidemics such as cholera and typhoid could spread. The ministry has advised Iraqis to boil water before drinking or cooking to reduce the risk of disease. In one poor, low-lying area of Baghdad, residents waded through streets shrouded in water after heavy rain. One resident said there was no power to work drainage systems.

Washington and its allies say that they have bombed only military or militarily useful targets. Iraqi officials say the aim of the raids is to destroy the nation's infrastructure and punish civilians.

BRITISH ARMY Victory elates Desert Rats

FROM KEITH DOVKANTS WITH THE 1ST ARMOUR DIVISION IN IRAQ

THE Desert Rats were advancing at lightning speed across Iraq yesterday, elated after their first victory and within sight of completing their combat role. Commanders were optimistic that, for British troops, the fighting could end soon. So far, ten men have been killed in action and six wounded.

The 4th and 7th Armoured Brigades were seeking out pockets of resistance yesterday, but as Iraqi soldiers continued their wholesale surrender, a British officer said: "It's like herding sheep."

They took hundreds of prisoners in Monday's battle, in which a mechanised brigade equipped with Soviet tanks was over-run. Yesterday the prisoners, a ragged, beaten and demoralised rabble, were passing through a holding area behind the front line before being driven to camps in Saudi Arabia. All Iraqi wounded have been evacuated by helicopter with British casualties.

The 1st Armoured Division, with other coalition forces, had the task of suppressing the vaunted Republican Guard, but it was not clear yesterday whether this would be necessary as these troops are proving less of a threat than was feared. A concentration of them north of British positions was reported to be breaking up. (This report is subject to allied military reporting restrictions)

IRAQI FORCES

Military claims that pullout is completed

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN BAGHDAD

IRAQI claimed yesterday that its soldiers had completed their withdrawal from Kuwait "by first light this morning" but that allied military assaults continued. A military spokesman said the allies had launched an airborne landing at an air base near Nasiriyah, about 175 miles south of Baghdad, and were confronted by Iraqi civilians and units of the Popular Army militia.

According to Baghdad radio, the spokesman said the pullout was in line with President Saddam Hussein's orders, "although the enemy has interfered in the withdrawal of our forces and demonstrated all his cowardly, mean and lowly characteristics".

On Tuesday, the radio reported that Saddam had visited frontline commanders of the 1st Army Corps to inspect preparations for defending against "great Iraq's security and sovereignty". The broadcast, which variously referred to Saddam as field marshal, president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, did not reveal the time of the visit or the position of the corps. However, the corps is believed to be on Iraq's border with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, where some reports suggested fighting was raging.

The military spokesman did not say if Iraqi regular troops were involved in the fighting near Nasiriyah, where the air

base has been repeatedly attacked by coalition bombers. Bridges around the city also have been subject to repeated bombing. Much of the country around the city is marshland, making the highways in the area crucial for travel.

Travellers from Basra to Baghdad said the highway between the cities, along the Euphrates north of Nasiriyah, was cut off yesterday and that they had been diverted along the Tigris highway. They said they saw hundreds of military lorries carrying soldiers moving north from the Kuwaiti border into Basra late on Tuesday.

(This report was compiled under Iraqi censorship.)

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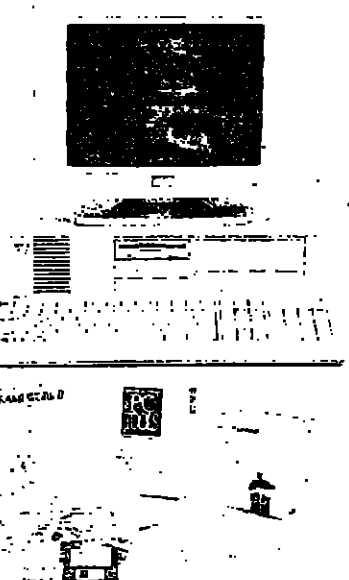
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Saturday Review

The other, wider gulf

'All the confusion and uncertainties of a society that has changed in only three generations from the camel to the Cadillac have led to huge dislocations of thought and way of life, generational conflicts and religious revivalism that more and more are being channelled against the source of so much unhappiness: the West and the western way of life'

Michael Binyon on division and suspicion, the talismans of a hard road to peace in the Middle East

Be sure of The Times on Saturday: order a copy today

BRITISH VICTIMS

Families mourn nine Britons killed by US pilot's error

By KERRY GILL AND PETER VICTOR

THE killing of nine British soldiers mistakenly bombed by an American aircraft in the Gulf was yesterday described by the prime minister as "one of those horrendous things that happens in war".

The deaths, one of a serviceman aged just 17, were among 13 of British soldiers in the Gulf. The defence ministry said yesterday that the incident was under investigation.

Colonel Barry Stevens, a military spokesman, said that 13 British troops had died and that ten had been wounded during fighting. American A-10, designed to attack tanks, fired at two British Warrior infantry fighting vehicles "in the heat of battle", he said. The incident was "a matter of particular sadness both to ourselves and the American forces".

The defence ministry named the nine killed in the A-10 incident as Fusilier Paul Peter Atkinson, aged 19, of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, from Co Durham; Private Conrad Philip Cole, 17, Queen's Regiment, of Rochdale; Private Neil Walker Duncan Donald, 18, Queen's Own Highlanders, of Forres; Private Martin Ferguson, 21, Queen's Own Highlanders, of Fort William; Fusilier Richard Gillespie, 19, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, of Tyne-mouth; Private John William Lang, Queen's Own Highlanders, of BAOR, Germany; Fusilier Kevin Leach, 20, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, of Northumberland; Fusilier

Lee James Thompson, 19, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, of Coventry, and Pte Stephen Timothy Satchell, 18, Queen's Regiment, of East Sussex. Lance Corporal Terence William Hill, 26, Royal Corps of Transport, of Middlesex, died on active service, the ministry said. Next of kin were informed yesterday.

The family of one soldier killed in the A-10 attack forgave the pilot his error last night. Clive Satchell, aged 16, brother of Stephen Satchell, said: "I can't blame the pilot for what happened to my brother, although I am bitterly upset. There was a big battle on, and he made a bad mistake. The whole family has discussed this, and we have decided he cannot be held responsible. I now it sounds strange, but this is a war, and errors can happen."

The family now wants his brother, David, aged 28, married with two children, out of the Gulf region. "I want David brought home straight away," Stephen said. "It's not right that he should be kept out there now, not in these circumstances."

Private Conrad Cole, from Lancashire, just three weeks off his 18th birthday, was such a good soldier that he had been earmarked to give army careers talks. Major John Hallam, an army spokesman, said: "He was very highly thought of. After he completed his basic training he was sent up to the army careers information office at Rochdale as a satisfied soldier — one who could project a good image of the army to the general public and any young person thinking of joining the army."

Private Neil Donald's father Jim, 36, a British Rail employee, said: "The family is devastated. My wife has taken the news particularly badly." Mr Donald's other son, John, aged 17, joined the same regiment on January 7. He is going home to Scotland on compassionate leave from basic training in Newcastle. Neil joined up in June 1988 and went to Germany with his regiment in October the following year.

Lee Thompson, of Coventry, died as his regiment fought the Iraqi Republican Guard south of Basra. Yesterday morning, an army officer called at Lee's house to break the news to his parents Michael and Barbara. Mrs Thompson said: "All we know is that he was killed in action last night. The officer said he would get in touch with us later to give us more details."

Private Donald, from Forres, Morayshire, was engaged to Gillian Kesson, aged 23, of Inverness. His father,

James Donald, said his son had joined the army as a boy soldier at the age of 15. Another son, John, aged 16, had just finished a junior leader's course in the army. Mr Donald said: "The family is very upset. His mother is under sedation and is too upset to speak." The family was being comforted by Rev Bill Reid, a local minister.

Private John Lang, aged 19, also served in the Queen's Own Highlanders. His parents live at the regiment's base in Germany, where his father, Corporal Keith Lang, is serving.

Private Martin Ferguson, aged 21, of Fort William was another Queen's Own Highlander, on attachment to the 4th Armoured Brigade. His twin brother, Clark, is also in the front line.

Last night Private Ferguson's parents, Simon and Jeanette, said they were informed by an army captain. Mrs Ferguson said: "Martin wrote a poem to me which I received this week. In it he gave his feelings as to what the war was all about. He told me what he was there for, and what might happen to him."

Private Ferguson's brother-in-law, Fraser MacLachlan, was angry about the circumstances of the death. "To be killed by fragments of a US shell is so unfair it is unbelievable. The military kept that information from us."

Private was to marry on return

PRIVATE Carl Moul, aged 22, who was killed yesterday during the ground offensive in the Gulf, had joined the army almost exactly a year ago. He had been due to marry when he returned after his tour of duty (Peter Victor writes).

Vicky Dolman, his fiancée, aged 19, and his family were yesterday comforting one another after they were told of his death by two officers of the First Staffordshire Regiment.

Miss Dolman, a hairdresser, said she had received letters three times a week from Pte Moul and had been counting the days until he came home. The couple became engaged five months ago.

She said: "He went to Germany and then on to the Gulf in October after passing out. The last time I saw him was the beginning of September. We were saving up for a house and looking forward to getting married. I am lonely and empty now. He was brave and I am proud of him."

His family, of Church Gresley, Derbyshire said Pte Moul had wanted to be a soldier all his life. He eventually joined the infantry section of the First Staffordshire Regiment. His mother, Marjorie, aged 63, said: "Carl was the baby of the family. He always wanted to be in the army. Even when he was little if he had a toy it had to be something to do with the army. Action Man or something. I just thought he would come home. He was so full of life."

Pte Moul trained at Whittington Barracks and was on the same course as Pte William Davies who was killed by the IRA at Lichfield station last June.

Pte Moul's father John, aged 63, said the family had looked forward to receiving letters and photographs from their son. The last letter the family received came on Tuesday, the day Carl died, and was postmarked February 18, before the ground offensive.

Mr Moul, a retired miner who worked at Donisthorpe colliery, said: "I still can't believe the news. But he had always wanted to join the army — even though he knew it could be dangerous."



Carl Moul: family said he had wanted to be a soldier all of his life



Thompson: killed by American fire



Donald: killed in action in the Gulf war

HISTORIC BATTLEGROUND

Conflict threatens ancient sites

By GEORGE HILL

AS THE allied ground forces push northwards to cut off the retreat of President Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard, they are entering territory that contains the remains of the earliest centres of civilisation on Earth.

Of the Chaldees, Uruk, Nippur and many other sites dating back to biblical times, some of which are still awaiting excavation, lie in the battle zone. The mounds that mark the remains of ancient cities are often the only features on the flat desert landscape, and they might be used by tank forces seeking cover in combat.

Since the danger of war first became apparent, archaeologists have been torn between fear of the damage that might be done to irreplaceable antiquities, reluctance to assist Saddam's cause by highlighting the threat to the sites of allied bombing missions, and an equal reluctance to endanger their own standing in a postwar Iraq. However, nine American scholars recently wrote to President Bush urging him to protect sensitive sites, and it is reported that the US government is seeking advice on what areas to avoid.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that for years Iraq has adopted a policy of putting installations that might be subject to military attack close to archaeological sites, as a means of protection. Hundreds of ancient sites, many with military and industrial complexes near by, are scattered throughout the Tigris and Euphrates valleys from the north of Iraq to the south. But the most ancient are those in the south.

Of the Chaldees, founded at least 6,000 years ago, is the place where the Book of Genesis emerges from the landscape of our right myth into the geography of mythologised history. A great flood there about 3000 BC might have been the origin of Noah's flood. Ur is named in the Bible as the city from which the patriarch Abraham first set out on his wanderings to the promised land. Its great ziggurat, about 80ft high and more than 150ft square, was already centuries old when he turned his back on it. Changes in the course of the river in about 400 BC dried up its fields and left Ur a ghost town.

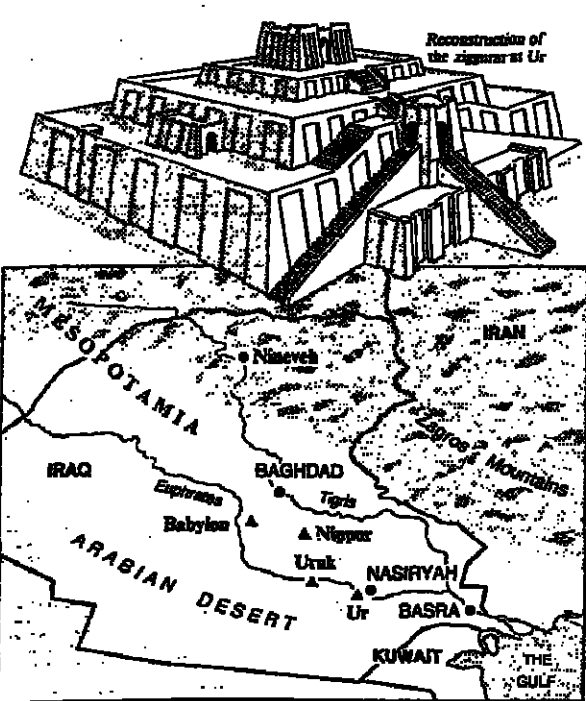
Ur lies about 100 miles west of Basra, the main control base for the armies leaving Kuwait, and close to Nasiriyah, which has reportedly been captured by allied forces. Visits to the site have been discouraged since the base, which is overlooked by the ziggurat, was built at Nasiriyah in the early 1980s. The base must already have been the target of many bombing raids. Some reports suggest that Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries have even been mounted on top of the monument itself. "Ur

is so close to the air base that it must be at risk," Dr Roger Matthews, director of the permanent British archaeological expedition to Iraq, said. He was stranded in Britain when Kuwait was invaded last August. "But I doubt whether it would be very vulnerable to an accidental hit."

Nicholas Postgate, reader in Mesopotamian studies at Cambridge University, shares Dr Matthews's confidence in the durability of the masonry of 4000 BC. "The ziggurat is a solid mass of earth and mud bricks," he said. "It would need a pretty big bomb to make any impression on it. It has been heavily restored with modern brickwork, which would be less able to resist the shock of an explosion. A bomb might shake all that off and bring the ziggurat back closer to its previous condition."

It would be ironic if, as seems likely, the crude mud bricks of Ur prove to have outlasted the modern walls of Saddam's presidential palace, blown apart by bombs almost before the plaster was dry. The region has seen many such ironies, however, as generations of fortresses have come and gone over thousands of years.

Basra itself was occupied by the British in both world wars and was made the base for three expeditions aimed at Baghdad — in 1915, 1916 and 1940. The territory that they crossed, which was the birthplace of urban civilisation, is the scene of battle yet again.



Labour sticks to firm line

By PHILIP WEBSTER
CHIEF POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour party stuck to its firm line on the Gulf war yesterday as Neil Kinnock easily beat off a left-wing call for an immediate ceasefire.

The ruling national executive issued a strong condemnation of the inhumanity of President Saddam Hussein for refusing to take the action he knew would end the war. The executive hoped that Iraqi forces would leave their military vehicles and lay down their arms, thus ensuring that the conflict could be halted.

A motion proposed by Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner calling for a ceasefire and the introduction of UN forces into Kuwait and on to the frontier with Iraq was defeated by 18 votes to five.

Outside the meeting, Mr Kinnock said that Iraq must respond quickly to calls for compliance. "It is evidence of Saddam Hussein's inhumanity that he is not responding to that offer and saving a lot of lives on both sides," he said. Unless there is evidence of troops departing from their vehicles and laying down their arms then the assumption has got to be, in the interests of the safety of our forces, that they are intent upon aggression themselves."

Labour leaders are relieved that the tough line they have adopted since last August, at the risk of upsetting constituency activists and doubters on the soft left, has been vindicated.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, called on the allies to show mercy on the battlefield. "It is now crucial that in the final stages of winning the war, we do not damage our chances of winning the peace which follows it. We have to disarm Saddam Hussein. But this does not mean that we have to humiliate the Iraqi people."

The coalition commanders should use every means to show the Iraqi soldiers, trapped in a war they did not want, how to surrender. "Mercy is a quality which should not be absent, even from a battlefield and especially in the hands of the victor," Mr Ashdown said.

Freedom for three held as PoWs

Three Iraqi students detained as possible threats to national security and then designated as prisoners of war because of their alleged military status have been freed (Stewart Trender writes).

A defence ministry enquiry has decided that they are not PoWs and the Home Office said yesterday that it had abandoned further attempts to deport them. Their release is likely to fuel criticism of the operation mounted by the Home Office, on M15 advice, to arrest and deport selected Iraqis and Palestinians because of the Gulf war.

The operation has been attacked over the inaccuracy of the information used and the individuals chosen. The three Iraqi men were originally arrested to face deportation. Redesignated as PoWs, they were among 35 held at Rolleston camp in Wiltshire as Iraqi military personnel.

The three were freed after representations to a board of enquiry made up of military officers. The other men will remain at the camp.

Wildlife action

Two wildlife experts, Roy Dennis, of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Burr Heneman, a director of the United States section of the International Council for Bird Preservation, flew to Saudi Arabia yesterday to examine ways of limiting the damage caused by oil slicks.

MPs want trial

Sixty-three per cent of MPs believe that Saddam Hussein should be tried for war crimes, according to a survey published last night. Out of 75 MPs questioned, eight out of ten Conservatives and nearly a third of Labour members backed such a trial.

UK firms bid

Ten British firms are on an international shortlist of 36 building companies being considered for emergency repair work in Kuwait. The firms, including Wimpey, John Laing, Higgs and Hill and GEC Marconi, have 48 hours to submit detailed bids.

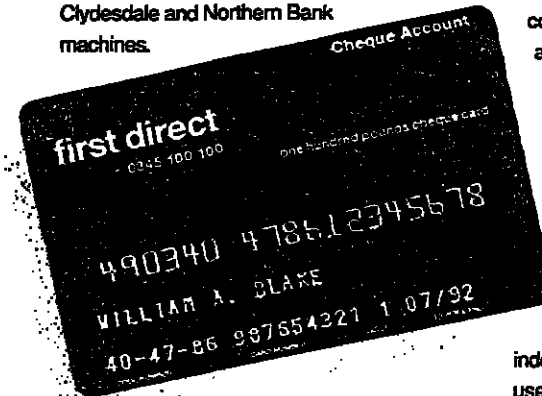
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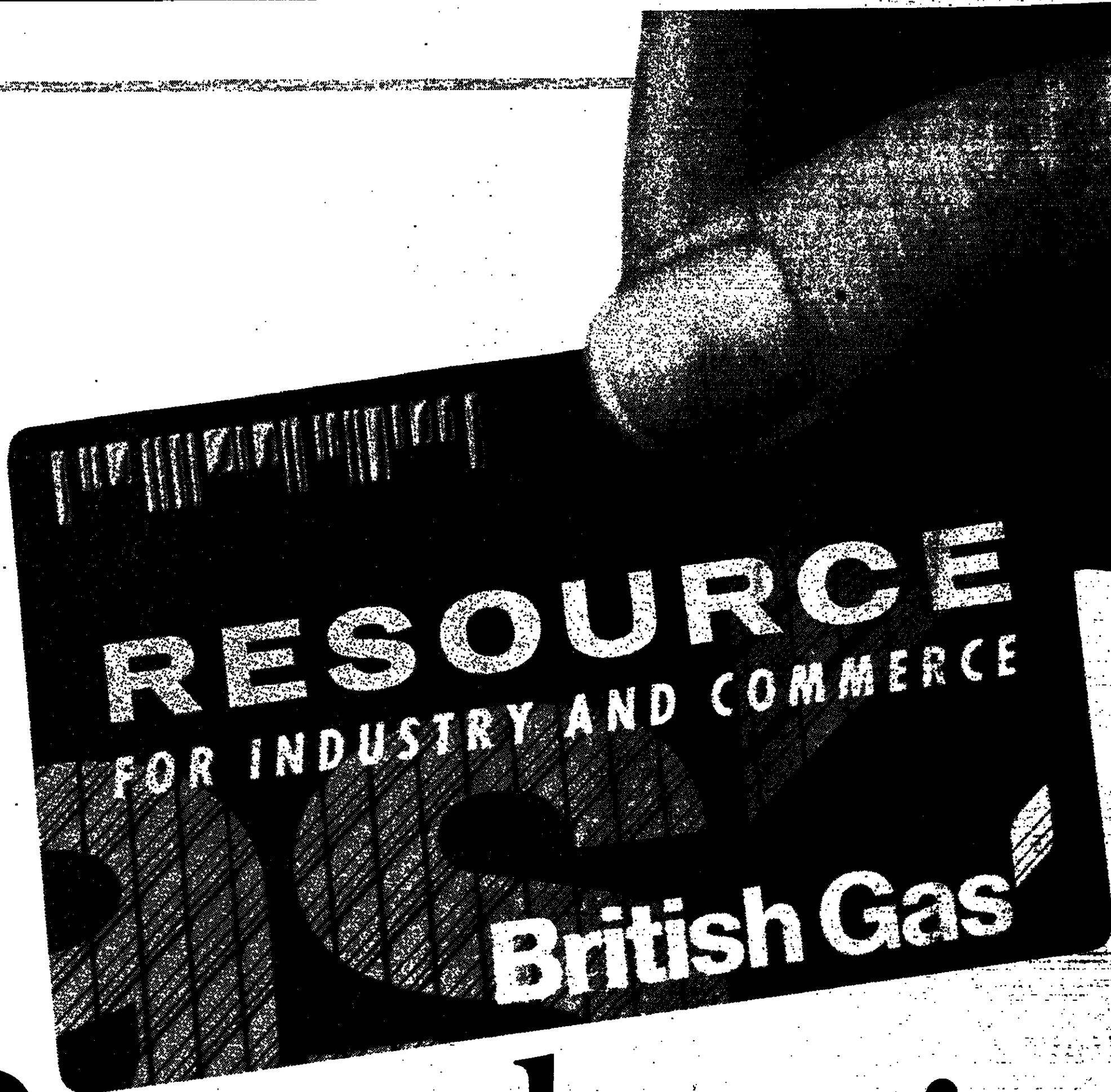
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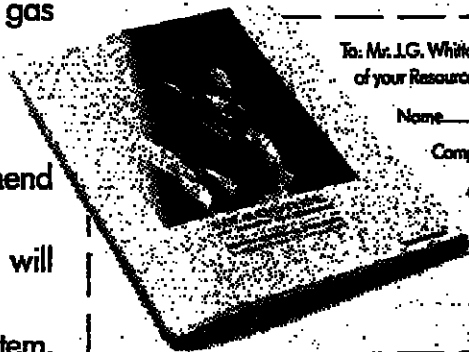
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Guita died a drug a

Stephen Clark, 48, with the band E, died on a sofa with vodka, possibly after a dinner of mutton. He was 48 yesterday. Jane Dean, Mr. Clark's friend, had asked his drinking part. He had been told to feed the millionaires back in sleeping off the night. He was told that Mr. Clark, age 48, had been dead for after passing out. Daniel Van Al Clark's friend said Clark was coming downstairs and he said he could not find him. Clark's friend, a friend of Clark's, said Clark's death was a dramatic abuse of alcohol poisoning.

Official ch

Keith Hall, deputy Essex social services director, cleared by Essex's own courts as a result of a general inquiry of Essex county council. Mr Hall had ten years' experience and had been accepted with

School's di

A primary school at Green, Warrington, is launching its service - a free of the pub as pupils - when it council ends its school service in April. A million education service will cater for and anyone in the co at £1 a meal.

Frozen asse

Officials who found or when emptying bones of electricity and two power sites have that users were involved in the shape pieces. The fraud Wear Valley council.

Windmills v

A £10 million proposal for a windmill to build mills, each 120ft high. The windmill, near Hal Cammell, to generate electricity for 8,000 was approved yesterday.

Suppliers believe the trading opportunities to come will be as important as the Channel tunnel is to L.

£9501

DETAILED plans for a million motorway. No upon 100,000 new in potential cons public and private sectors yesterday. The 20-mile eas motorway would run from A14 Newmarket by Cambridge through Fen to Lincolnshire and Tyne and Wear. The scheme, which the European Commission, Humberside council and Marks & S say the road would create 60,000 jobs.

IQ-boosting claim attacked as pills go on sale in UK

By THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A SCIENTIFIC study claiming that children's intelligence can be boosted by vitamin pills was attacked by experts yesterday as the pills were launched in British shops.

The multi-vitamin and mineral pills are being marketed by the company which provided them for the study and are being sold on the basis of the findings. The project was funded with £500,000 by the Dietary Research Foundation, an independent charity which will receive 5 per cent of the proceeds from sales of the product.

The Medical Research Council yesterday expressed "very great doubts" about the findings and criticised the way the study was published. The results were announced at a press conference in London yesterday to coincide with the launch of the pills, the screening of a BBC programme about the study, on BBC television, and the publication of a BBC book written by one of the researchers.

The authors of the study include two elderly emeritus professors, Hans Eysenck, an

eminent psychologist, and John Yudkin, a nutritionist. The results are published in a special issue of *Personality and Individual Differences*, a little-known journal of which Professor Eysenck is editor.

Although the study was designed to include hundreds of schoolchildren in Britain, Israel and the United States, only the American results have been produced. The project involved 615 American children aged from 12 to 16, who were given either a placebo or one of three formulations of the pills, and who took IQ tests at the beginning and end of the exercise.

The results showed that one group of children taking the multi-vitamin and mineral tablets demonstrated an improvement of four points on their first IQ rating.

"The results obtained... are believed to confirm the claim that, in certain circumstances, a supplement of vitamins and mineral elements can improve the intelligence scores of a significant proportion of school-age children," Professor Eysenck and his co-authors say in their conclusions. However, the Medical Research Council said yesterday: "There is no known physio-

logical mechanism whereby the intake of vitamins can affect the intelligence of well-nourished people." The product being launched here was based solely on the US evidence. "The British evidence has not been made available," The council said that one example of "basic scientific reasoning" appeared to have been ignored in the study, putting the findings into very great doubt.

The study was also criticised by David NeaSmith, professor of nutrition and dietetics at King's College London. He had contributed to the QED programme but wrote earlier this week to the BBC demanding that his comments should be removed because of his doubts about its objectivity. The BBC declined and said yesterday the programme was fair and well-balanced.

Yesterday, Professor NeaSmith said he had very serious reservations about the manner in which the study was conducted, the way it was published and "most of all the conclusions it has reached". Parents should not for one moment believe that giving vitamin pills to their children would in any way affect their academic performance.

Professor Yudkin said that the pills did not improve every child's IQ, and nobody could tell which child would benefit.

Graham Aaronson, chairman of the Dietary Research Foundation's board of trustees, defended the study yesterday but regretted "the timing of the launch of the product alongside the publication of the results".

Healthcrafts Vitachieve pills are marketed by Booker Nutritional Products of Weybridge, Surrey. A month's supply of 60 tablets costs £5.99.

Medical briefing, page 17

Guitarist died after drug abuse

Stephen Clark, lead guitarist with the band Def Leppard, died on a sofa after a binge on vodka, painkillers and either heroin or morphine, a coroner was told yesterday.

Janie Dean, Mr Clark's girl friend, had asked the guitarist's drinking partner to leave his Chelsea home and had gone to bed thinking the millionaire rock musician was sleeping off the effects. The inquest was told, however, that Mr Clark, aged 30, could have been dead from any time after passing out on the sofa.

Daniel Van Alphen, Mr Clark's friend, said: "When he was drinking alcohol, Stephen Clark was completely uncontrollable and would drink until he could not stand."

Paul Knapman, the Westminster coroner, said that Mr Clark's death was due to non-dependent abuse of drugs and alcohol poisoning.

Official cleared

Keith Hall, deputy director of Essex social services, was yesterday cleared by a jury at Norwich crown court of indecently assaulting a girl aged 13. Within minutes of the verdict, Essex county council said that Mr Hall had tendered his resignation and that it had been accepted with regret.

School's diner

A primary school at Rockwell Green, Wellington, Somerset, is launching its own meals service - for the public as well as pupils - when the county council ends its school meals service in April under £4.6 million education cuts. The service will cater for 80 pupils and anyone in the community at £1 a meal.

Frozen assets

Officials who found only water when emptying the coin boxes of electricity meters at two gypsy sites have found that users were inserting ice carved in the shape of 50p pieces. The fraud has cost West Valley council £6,000.

Windmills win

A £10 million proposal by National Power to build 23 windmills, each 150ft high, at Cold Northcott, near Hallworthy, Cornwall to generate enough electricity for 5,000 people, was approved yesterday.



Eysenck: joint author of scientific study

Butter and milk health claims to be reviewed

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A STUDY that suggested that milk and butter might help to reduce heart attacks has caused such concern among medical pressure groups that the Medical Research Council (MRC) has been forced to organise a review of the findings.

The study, by a team led by Dr Peter Elwood of the council's epidemiology unit in South Wales, suggested that men who drank more than a pint of milk a day were eight times less likely to die of heart disease than those who drank no milk at all. It also showed that butter-eaters were about half as likely to suffer from heart disease as those who use low-fat spreads.

Yesterday officials at the council's headquarters in London said they were worried that parts of the report, particularly those concerned with milk and butter, did not appear to have been assessed by outside experts before publication. A scientific panel would be convened to referee the work as soon as possible.

A council spokeswoman said that there had been huge public interest in the study, and great pressure from various groups who felt the publication had caused confusion. "We couldn't let it continue," she said. Much of the report had already been

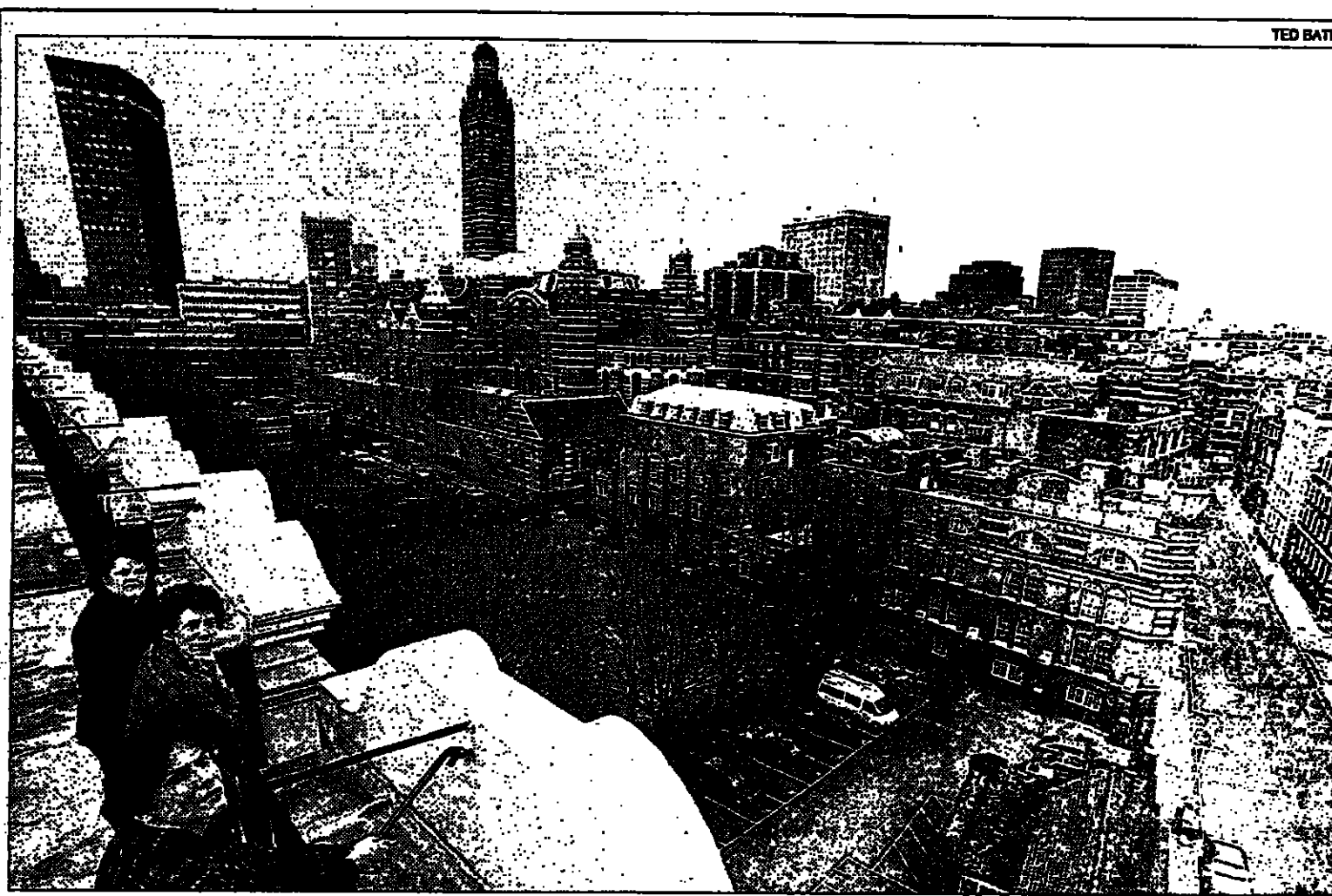
published in scientific journals, but some parts including the references to milk and butter had not. It was unusual, she said, for an MRC unit to publish work on its own, as had happened in this case.

Dr Elwood was unavailable yesterday but he has earlier made it clear that people should not change their eating habits until his findings are confirmed by others. The report lists seven principal investigators and 62 associates and advisers who helped with the study, one of the biggest carried out in Britain. Almost 5,000 men were monitored for up to ten years, and their medical history compared with their diets, cholesterol levels and other variables.

The Coronary Prevention Group welcomed the announcement of the panel. Michael O'Connor, director of the group, said: "Everyone wants to know what to eat to prevent heart disease and that is why it is very wrong that such findings which purport to overturn medical consensus should be released to the press before they have been checked by outside experts."

The British Heart Foundation also welcomed the review.

High-fat diets, page 12
Health, page 17



Mrs Patten (centre) and two other campaigners against the development in the cathedral precincts take a bird's eye view of the site

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

CARDINAL Hume's Westminster archdiocese is on collision course with the conservation establishment and some leading Catholic laymen over a planned office block in the precincts of Westminster cathedral.

Chris Patten, chairman of the Conservative party, and Lord St John of Fawley, chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, both prominent Catholics, are among opponents of the plan to build a

Archdiocese plan seen as gross intrusion

four-storey pastoral and education centre in Francis Street, within the cathedral curtilage and the associated conservation area. They say it will obscure the free southern view of John Francis Bentley's Byzantine domes and belltower. The planning application comes

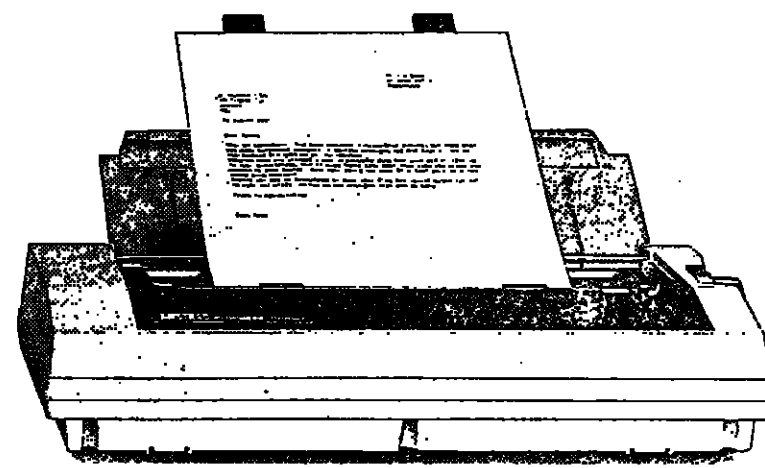
before Westminster city council tonight. In a letter to *The Times* today Mr Patten's wife Lavender joins Sir Roy Strong and Lady Janner in calling for it to be withdrawn. They say the building would be a gross intrusion on the character of the area. Mrs Patten's

home overlooks the cathedral. Yesterday, Cardinal Hume denied that the building would be aesthetically unpleasant. The view it interrupted was available only in winter, being screened by trees in summer, and it would enhance the particular corner. He said: "I don't want to be in conflict with neighbours. I want to be sensitive to their needs. But I have to be sensitive to the needs of the diocese." The building was urgently needed.

Letters, page 13



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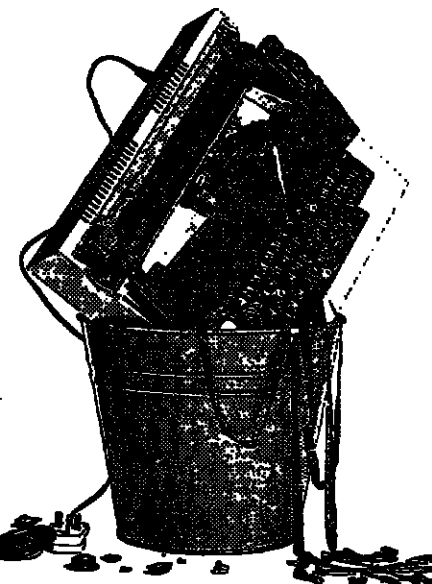
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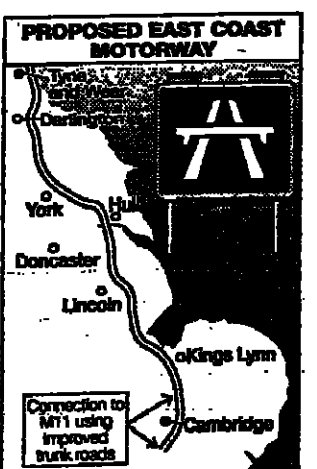
£950m east road unveiled

By MICHAEL DYNES, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

DETAILED plans for a £950 million motorway between Cambridge and Newcastle upon Tyne were unveiled by an influential consortium of public and private-sector interests yesterday.

The 230-mile east coast motorway would run from the A45 Newmarket bypass in Cambridgeshire through the Fens to Lincolnshire and on to Humberside, North Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear. Sponsors of the scheme, which include the European Commission, the Confederation of British Industry, Humberside county council and Marks & Spencer, say the road would create up to 60,000 jobs.

Supporters believe that with trading opportunities opening up in Eastern Europe, the route will be as important to the seaboard counties as the Channel tunnel is to London



and the South-East. About 25 per cent of the cost could be financed by small to medium housing, industrial and commercial developments along the route, principally in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk,

Lincolnshire, Humberside and York. The balance would have to be found from the national road-building programme.

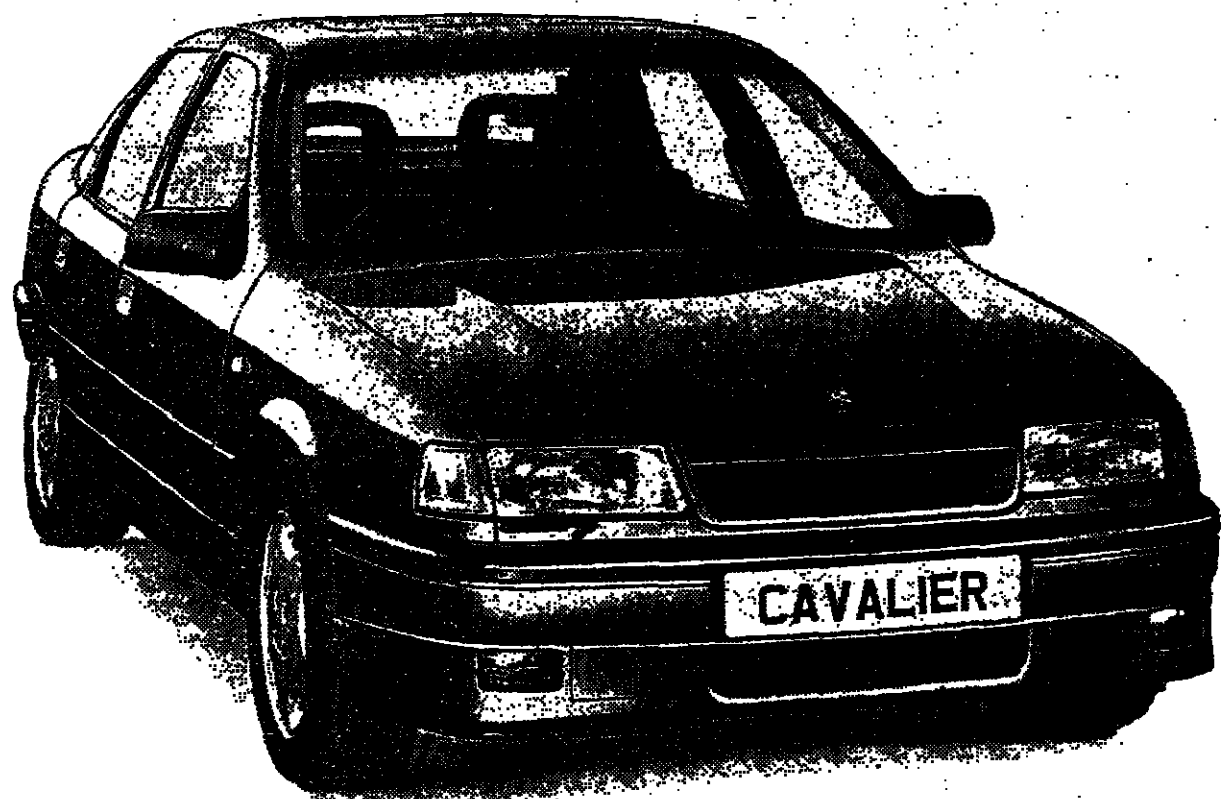
Rural preservation and environmental groups have attacked the proposals because the route cuts through two areas of green belt around Cambridge and York, two sites of special scientific interest in Humberside and large tracts of attractive landscape and high-grade agricultural land. Supporters of the scheme insist that the road has been planned to cause the least disruption and environmental damage. In addition, the plans would need local authority approval.

The route was designed by a group of consultants including Wotton Jeffries, Kennedy Henderson and Peat Marwick and McIntock.

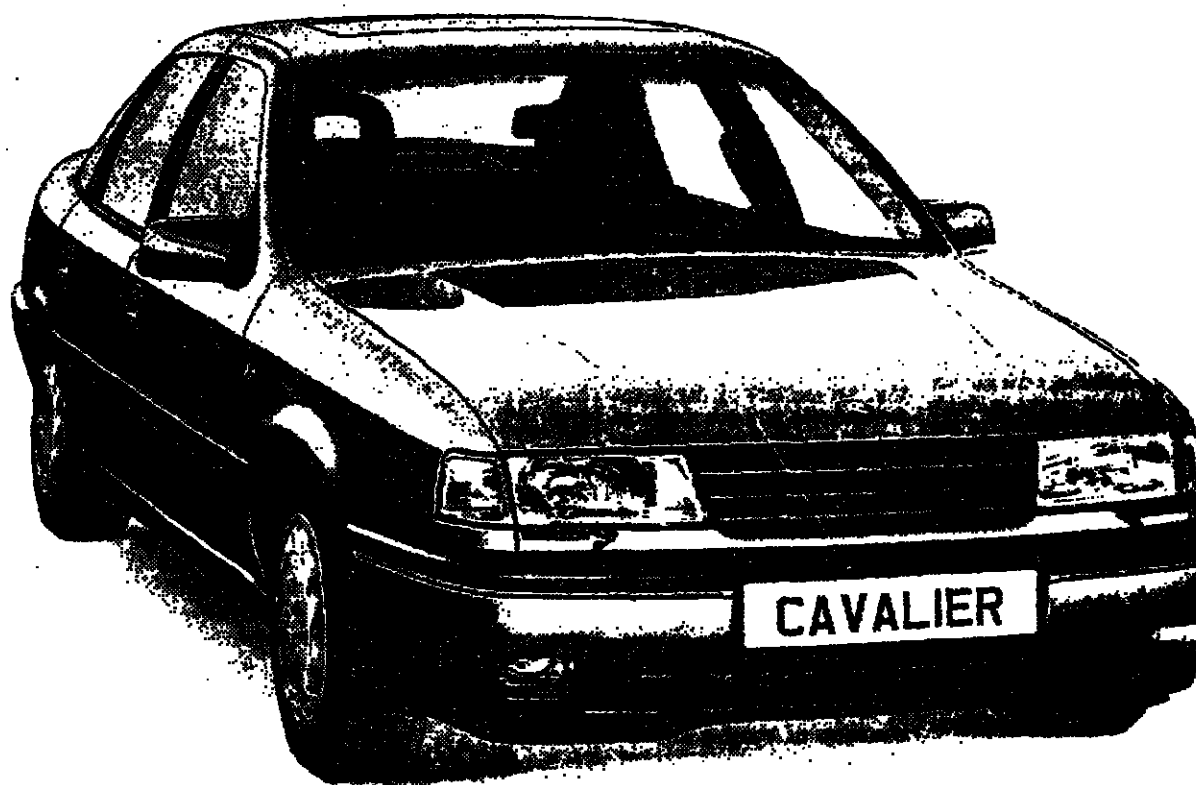
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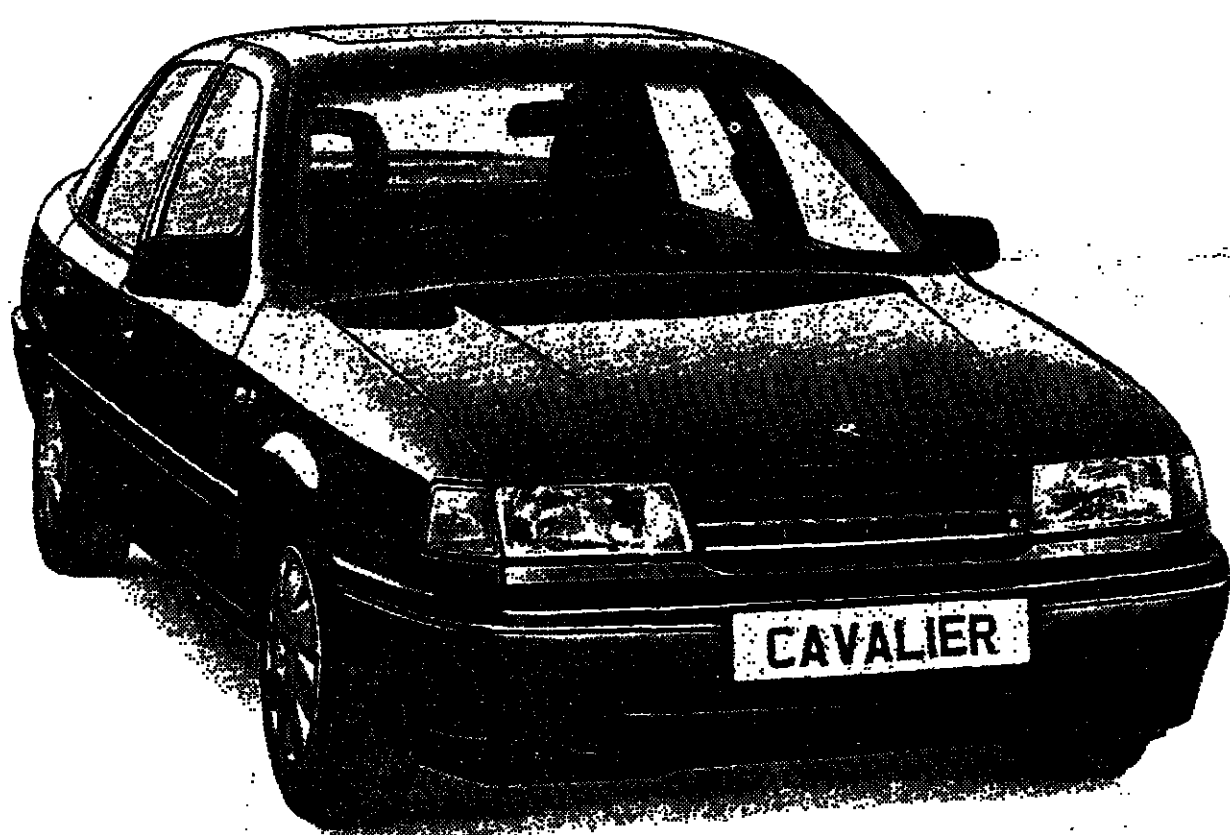
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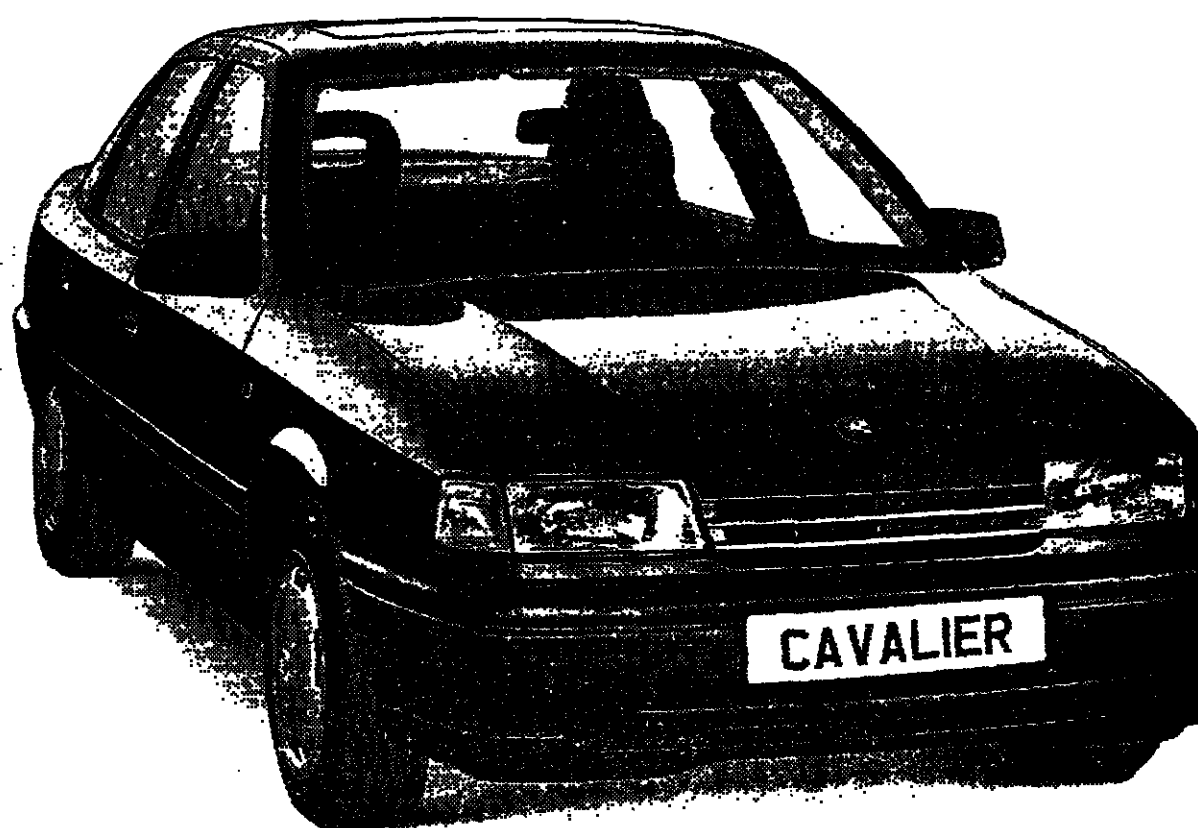
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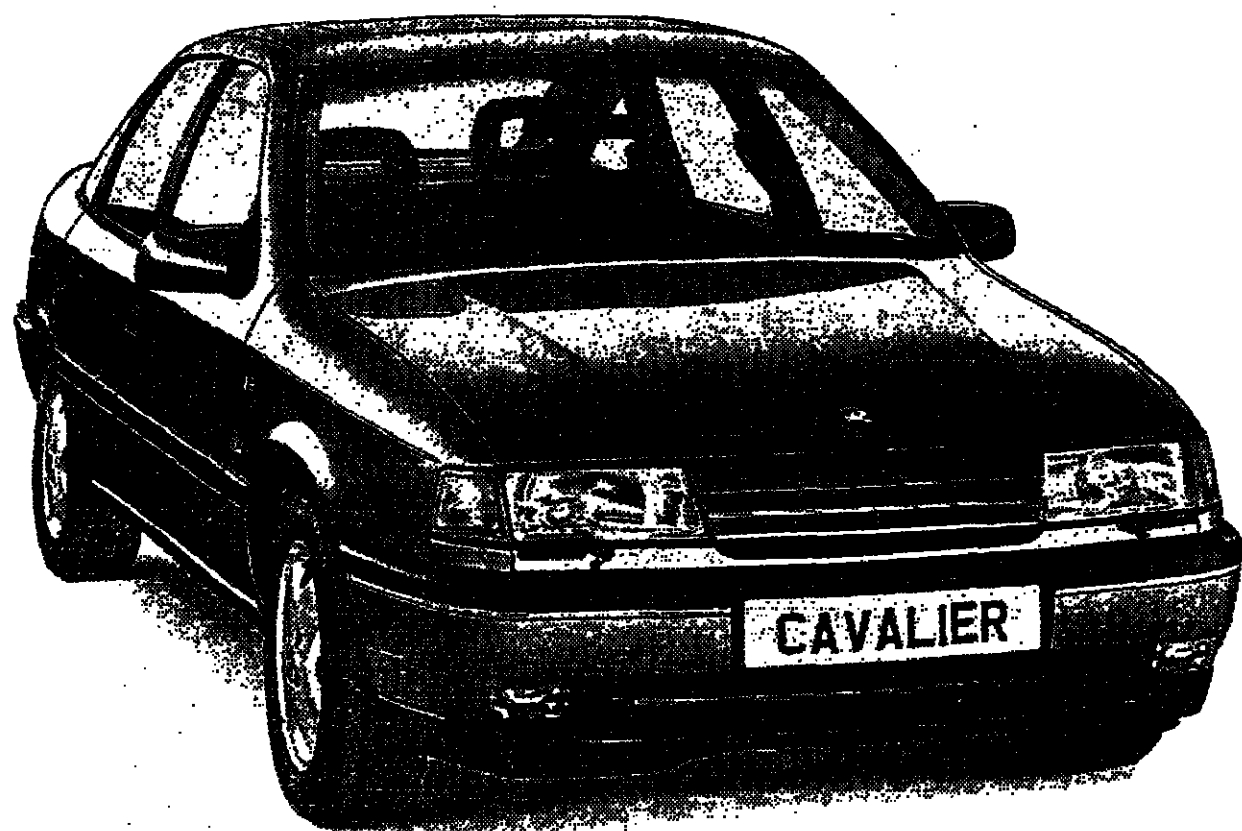
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Right-wing Afrikaners fight police outside jail

FROM GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

RIGHT-wing extremists, angered by the detention of fellow activists, have clashed with police in the biggest confrontation of its kind since the South African government began dismantling apartheid a year ago.

Several hundred khaki-clad demonstrators broke through police cordons round Pretoria's central prison on Tuesday night, before being forced back by tear gas. At least one shot was fired, but no serious injuries were reported and there were no arrests.

Eugene Terre Blanche, the leader of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), said "all hell would break loose" if 40 right-wing activists, detained for acts of political violence, were not released. He made the threat after his supporters had been prevented from delivering a tele-

vision set to the prisoners. Police said permission had been granted for a protest rally, but they had stopped an illegal march on the prison.

Tension had been increased by a hunger strike by nine detainees, including Piet Rudolph, the deputy leader of the Boerestaat party, who has refused food and liquids for more than three weeks. Mr Rudolph issued a "farewell statement" to his followers at the weekend, and associates say that he is prepared mentally to die. They say that he has lost 26lb and is too weak to leave his cell.

Mr Rudolph, a former Pretoria city councillor, was detained in connection with bombings and thefts from state armories. He began his hunger strike in protest against the government's refusal to negotiate about an Afrikaner homeland.

Mr Terre Blanche has demanded that all right-wingers be released under a general amnesty. "If the authorities allow Mr Rudolph or any other detained right-winger to die in prison, while at the same time releasing black communists, the AWB will be left no choice but to take drastic steps," he said.

The rhetoric of the AWB leader has been undermined by a split in his ranks, which has led to the creation of a potentially more militant splinter group. Last weekend Gawie Volschenk, a long-serving regional commandant in the AWB, announced the formation of the Boer Commando which would strive for a broader and more powerful alliance of right-wing forces.

Denouncing Mr Terre Blanche for hampering unity and offensive action, he said: "In the next few months we will be giving the government an ultimatum. We will say, if you cross a certain line we will put plan B into action." Mr Volschenk said that this would involve a "rising up of the Boer nation to defend our land".

PORT ELIZABETH: A black student teacher died after being assaulted by young white men at a South African swimming pool formerly reserved for whites, police said yesterday.

Ronald Mqhele, aged 26, was punched, kicked and left unconscious and bleeding on Sunday after he and his friends were told that they were not allowed at the pool. Police said that they were treating his death as murder. No arrests have been made so far. (Reuters)

Aborigines open their own school

FROM ROBERT COCKBURN IN SYDNEY

THE first Aboriginal high school in the world opened yesterday in a heady atmosphere of ancient dreamtime rituals and protest songs that conjured up the American civil rights movement.

The day marked a significant victory. After 200 years of often brutal white settlement and missionary zeal, which virtually wiped out Australia's indigenous people, St Joseph's Catholic college in Sydney, became Pemulwuy Koori college. The name belongs to an Aboriginal chieftain who fought a long campaign against early British settlement in New South Wales.

The black, yellow and red Aboriginal flag was raised and the traditional "smoking" ceremony of burning green gum-tree leaves on a tray of glowing embers was conducted through the college classrooms.

The school, which will accommodate 130 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal secondary students, will try to straddle the chasm between the two communities in Australia.



Campaign style: Begum Khalida Zia, head of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and widow of General Zia-ul-Rahman, the former military president, giving her version of a victory sign after voting in Dhaka yesterday in the first free parliamentary polls since independence 20 years ago

Turnout high for Dhaka's free poll

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DHAKA

BANGLADESH conducted yesterday its first free, unrigged and largely non-violent parliamentary election in 20 years as an independent country. International observers praised it as a model poll.

Long and orderly queues formed at polling stations throughout the day and the turnout appeared surprisingly high. The peaceful atmosphere contrasted with the four previous parliamentary elections in which voters were intimidated by the military or terrified by goondas (thugs).

International observers said that they were impressed by strict adherence to procedures at polling stations and saw no serious evidence of irregularities. Large numbers of police were on standby in case of trouble, but they were not needed. Shops and businesses closed for the day. There were reports last night of minor outbreaks of violence in Chittagong and other areas. Forty people were arrested during the day in Dhaka for attempting to vote illegally.

The Awami League, headed by Sheikh Hasina Wazed and strong in rural areas, was confident last night of being the single largest party in the 300-seat parliament. But its main rival, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, headed by Begum Khalida Zia, believed it might benefit from a surprisingly large turnout of women and young people in towns.

The question is whether the loser of the election will accept defeat without resort to the traditional tactics of strikes, mass demonstrations and violence, which could threaten the fragile democracy. One of the competing heads of party will be elected by MPs as prime minister, after which parliament will decide whether to adopt a Westminster-style parliamentary system or continue with a revised presidential model.

The contest was focused on personalities, with little interest among the largely illiterate population in policies or manifestos. The economy is the overriding concern, but not even that was debated. The 1988 election was boycotted by all four main parties in protest at tactics used by General Ershad to ensure his continuation in power.

Women hurt: At least 50 women were injured at a polling station in western Bangladesh when two rival groups clashed. Two were admitted to hospital in critical condition. (AFP)

Salvador guerrillas raid capital

SAN SALVADOR - Left-wing guerrillas seized at least four houses in an elegant residential district of San Salvador, near the official residence of President Cristiani, and fought off government troops until early yesterday, witnesses and radio reports said. One civilian died and at least six were injured and the armed forces reported three soldiers wounded.

The district of Escalon in the northwest of the capital saw fierce fighting in November 1989 when the rebels of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front launched their biggest offensive in the civil war. Witnesses said that by dawn the rebels had withdrawn from the San Salvador volcano overlooking Escalon, but the government declared six blocks around the houses a restricted zone. (Reuters)

Rebels advance

NAIROBI - Rebels of the Tigre People's Liberation Front in northern Ethiopia said they had taken two more towns in a drive to overrun Gondar and Gojjam provinces. It was the first big attack by forces of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, of which the TPLF is the largest part, for six months. (Reuters)

Trains collide

Ciudad Serdán - Two passenger trains collided head-on on the Mexico City-Venacruz railway line near here, killing at least five people and injuring more than 50, officials said. At least eight of the injured were in serious condition, they added. (AP)

Radiation leak

Tokyo - Japan has had a third nuclear accident within three weeks. Radiation leaked from a nuclear waste treatment and testing facility in Tokai Mura, northeast of Tokyo, after a fault in the emergency power supply system. A spokesman from the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute said the accident was "harmless".

Violence flares in Albanian towns

FROM RICHARD BASSETT IN TIRANA

A BOMB has exploded at the headquarters of the Democratic party in the southern Albanian city of Vlore. There were no reported injuries in the attack on Tuesday night, but the building was badly damaged. In a separate development, 16 T54 tanks have taken up positions round the town of Korce, the birthplace of Albania's late communist dictator, Enver Hoxha.

Supporters of Hoxha and other hardline elements staged a rally in the town on Tuesday and tried to restore a statue of the dictator destroyed by anti-communists last week. There has also been a large anti-communist demonstration in the town, but it is unclear whether there have been any clashes.

President Alija has praised Hoxha and proposed a referendum on whether the statues that have been torn down by angry crowds should be replaced. Some automatic fire was heard in Tirana, the capital, early yesterday morning.

As Mr Alija's position becomes weaker, there is evidence that hardliners might be turning to Moscow for help. A new Soviet chargé d'affaires has arrived in Tirana amid signs that Moscow is anxious to increase its influence in the region.

Gorbachev's claim to centre ground angers reformists

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Gorbachev yesterday visited areas of southern Belorussia contaminated by radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl disaster, and stirred up heated debates about the statement he made in Minsk the previous day.

His speech to the Belorussian Academy of Sciences, which was televised nationwide, was clearly intended as a presidential policy statement.

The Soviet leader described himself as a politician of the "centre" whose main task was to prevent clashes between extremists. He also attacked "so-called democrats" - code for political radicals - for trying to engineer the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Mr Gorbachev directed particular venom at Gavril Popov, the mayor of Moscow, whom he accused of accepting the idea that the Soviet Union might break into "40 or 50 separate states".

Reformist politicians in the Russian Federation described Mr Gorbachev's statement as his harshest attack on the democratic cause and proof of his turn to the hardliners. General Dmitri Volkogonov, the military historian who threw in his lot with Boris Yeltsin, the Russian leader, last spring, said he had never heard more conclusive proof of President Gorbachev's return to the past.

The Soviet leader's references to people as "the crowd" in his condemnation of demonstrations against the regime provoked widespread

resentment. His response to questions at the Minsk tractor factory was also widely condemned as showing callous disregard for people's welfare. One person said: "You can't tell someone, who complains that his ration coupons won't buy anything, that you have issued a decree and he should get off his backside and do something about it. You just can't."

A Tass commentator blamed Western analysts for uncritical acceptance of the idea that Mr Gorbachev had moved towards the hardline position, and said that the president was right to call for order at a time of growing chaos. He also supported the president's objection to the way in which radicals referred to themselves as left-wingers, when in world political terms

they were on the right, advocating free enterprise and untrammelled private ownership. This idea, which is new to President Gorbachev's statements, suggests that moves might be afoot for the centre to reclaim the word "leftist" from the radicals.

The Soviet leader yesterday visited the town of Vetka and the industrial city of Gomel, both of which have suffered high radiation levels since the Chernobyl accident in 1986. It was his first visit to any contaminated areas, an omission that has long been a source of bitterness in Belorussia and the Ukraine.

While his journey may have been designed to repair some of the public relations damage before the fifth anniversary of the disaster, it also had a hard political purpose. On Tuesday, he pointed out to the Belorussian parliament the scale of the pollution and the continued expense of tackling it. He said that the cost far exceeded anything which a single republic could afford, and the money could be provided only through the paternal protection of a strong Soviet centre - the point at issue in the March 17 referendum.

This is a powerful argument in a small, predominantly agricultural republic contaminated by radiation. Mr Gorbachev's tour must be intended at least in part to dissuade those who might be tempted to vote against the preservation of the Soviet Union, scaring them with the spectre of their poverty and helplessness if the nation falls apart.

Gummer pushes farm cuts

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

FARMERS in Britain and the rest of the European Community will have to accept "sustained" cuts in the subsidised prices they are paid for their produce if the endemic oversupply of food is to be controlled and expenditure curbed, John Gummer, the agriculture minister, said in London yesterday.

He was speaking at the European Commission in Brussels agreed on proposals for an emergency package of cost-saving measures designed to prevent expenditure on the EC's common agricultural policy from overrunning a legally binding budgetary limit set by community governments in 1988.

Quotas and other artificial production curbs offered no more than "a quick fix", Mr Gummer told the tenth European Agriculture Outlook Conference. A "radical overhaul" was required that would leave farmers much more exposed to market forces.

The EC's agricultural expenditure was again running out of control and spending in 1991 was likely to be 25 per cent up on last year, Mr Gummer said.

Georgian deputies defy the Kremlin

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN TBILISI

HUNDREDS of young demonstrators chanted abusive slogans in front of the Georgian parliament yesterday as deputies convened for the first time since tension between the republic and Moscow sharpened over South Ossetia.

The deputies refused to include in the agenda of their two-day session any discussion on Ossetia where fighting between Georgian forces and ethnic Ossetians seeking independence from Georgia has claimed up to 40 lives.

The omission was in direct contravention of a claim in the Soviet parliament this week by the Soviet interior minister, Boris Pugo, that Georgian deputies would be considering the Kremlin's demands for a broader role for Soviet peacekeeping forces.

Mr Pugo told the Soviet parliament, where the Ossetians enjoy considerable sympathy among hardline politicians, that they should hold off from imposing Moscow's will in Georgia ahead of the local parliament's session. He served warning that the Soviet parliament did have the right to overrule its Georgian counterpart if necessary.

Yesterday a spokeswoman for the Georgian parliament

said: "Pugo can say what he likes, the issue of Ossetia is not on the agenda."

The deputies went on instead to approve measures to make it easier for parliament to be recalled in mid-term, and did other routine parliamentary business.

The demonstration, staged by supporters of the Georgian Congress, which accuses Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the president of the republic, of having "sold out" to Moscow, was a reminder of the conflicting pressures on the republican authorities.

The protesters chanted the name of Djada Iosseliani, the pro-Congress militia leader, who was arrested along with about 70 of his men last week.

Despite the defiant posturing by parliament, there were fresh signs from Ossetia itself of efforts to calm the situation and improve relations between Georgian forces and the Soviet peacekeeping contingent, which is accused by Tbilisi of bias towards the Ossetians. Latest reports said a joint patrol of Soviet and Georgian forces arrested five Ossetian guerrillas in the village of Avtvi, scene of a bloody attack at the weekend which claimed six Georgian lives.

NEW YORK NOTEBOOK by Charles Bremner

Wholesome America devours tales of sinful famous

SWIFT victory in the Gulf is said by the guardians of the US *Zeitgeist* to have reinforced a new wholesomeness in American life, a turn away from the cynicism born of Watergate and Vietnam. But if America is yearning for moral certainties, the publishing industry has yet to hear about it.

Never in history has so much been made out of revealing the lusts and failings of the famous and powerful. The shelves are crammed with invective and salacious exposés. Now the book world is gearing up for the hatchet job of the year - Kitty Kelley's biography of Nancy Reagan. Miss Kelley, a millionaire from best-sellers on Frank Sinatra and Jackie Kennedy, says that the "fear factor" was more of her 1,000 interview subjects to clam up when asked about the former First Lady.

"When I wrote about Frank Sinatra, I had trouble getting people to talk because some of them were literally afraid of losing their lives... but Nancy Reagan can have you tanned, have your taxes audited or make you lose your job or corporate board position," Miss Kelley's Nancy comes over as more cruel and calculating than her toughest critics alleged. Among the more mentionable

revelations are fresh shockers about the California astrologer said to have dictated White House affairs.

Hollywood's big studios have started an organised boycott of the Big Apple as a location because local unions demand too much money. But the clearest sign of a reversal in the pre-eminence of New York as culture capital comes in two new films extolling the delights of Los Angeles, one of them starring Woody Allen, the quintessential New Yorker. Fans will remember Allen's famous putdown of California from *Annie Hall*. The only contribution of the state to civilisation, he noted, was that you could turn right on a red traffic light. In his latest film, *Scenes From a Marriage*, directed by Paul Mazursky, Allen plays a sympathetic Los Angeles entertainment lawyer who abhors everything about New York. "If Philip starts in on me one more time about how New York is the cultural centre of the world and L.A. is a barren desert, I'm going to poke him in the eye," Allen says about a friend.

The other revised view of Los Angeles as a place to love comes in Steve Martin's *L.A.*

Story, a comedy that tries to show a likeable charm beneath everything New Yorkers have always considered most superficial about the place, from the sinister friendliness of strangers to monstrous traffic jams.

Some Woody Allen defenders see his anti-New York film as the ultimate Allen joke, but others are not so sure. He looks too comfortable with his ponytail and personalised surfboard, cruising the shopping centre with Bette Midler, who plays his wife.

Reverent New York critics have not been kind to the latest effort. "I think Woody Allen has become a major drag," said Peter Bart, New York-based editor of *Variety*.

Woody Allen might have invented America's latest enhancement to productivity in the work place - "mood-altering fragrances". Researchers have found that a whiff of peppermint or a squirt of lavender piped in through the air conditioning alters the mood of workers and makes them more productive and vigilant. Opposition is mounting among various groups to impregnating magazines with scent samples, on the ground that it inflicts injury on sensitive postmen and readers.

And a Boston-based group of militant lesbians is demanding scent-free zones.

The courts this week issued America's first fragrance injunction, ordering a Manhattan woman to desist from wearing perfume at home while seeking a divorce. Her perfume had caused such an allergic reaction to her husband that he had sustained a neck injury from coughing, according to his lawyer.



Allen: his latest character extols the delights of Los Angeles

Mark Weller on the limits international law sets on the coalition's right to continue fighting in Iraq

Where the traffic lights of battle say halt

General Jacob H. Smith of the US army was under heavy pressure in October, 1991. He was fighting an insurrection on the Philippine island of Samar, his enemies had engaged in manifest violations of humanitarian law and had broken a number of ceasefires. Even when his forces finally prevailed he feared for their safety. He ordered that all insurrectionists capable of making war should be engaged and killed. No quarter was to be given.

General Smith was soon to regret his decision. He had violated one of the central principles of humanitarian law, codified in the regulations annexed to the second Hague Convention two years before. These limit the means of injuring the enemy; it is permissible to use, and it is especially forbidden to kill or wound an enemy who, having laid

down his arms, or having no means of defence, has surrendered at discretion, and declare that no quarter will be given."

General Smith was brought before a court martial and found guilty. Will the international coalition be held equally liable for its refusal to cease fire and accept an Iraqi withdrawal from the theatre of conflict? Once the dust of battle has cleared, this issue is likely to feature prominently in the United Nations Security Council and in world debate.

The answer to the question comes in two parts. First, there is the extent of the authorisation to use force that was granted to the international coalition in resolution 678. Under the terms of that resolution, the application of military force must cease when it is no longer necessary for the achievement of the goals established by the UN. Had the Iraqi govern-

ment accepted the obligation of a full and unconditional withdrawal before the land war began, an immediate ceasefire would have been required.

Now the land battle is under way, the security council appears to have recognised that it would not be possible to freeze the position of the coalition troops in a moment of acute vulnerability: they could not be stopped until they had achieved and secured their objective, and this included cutting off enemy forces within Iraq.

In addition, the council has now demanded Baghdad's acceptance of all UN resolutions concerning Kuwait before a ceasefire takes effect. Perhaps surprisingly, the council has therefore apparently accepted the wider interpretation of the mandate in resolution 678. According to that hitherto controversial proposition, even

the secondary aim of the United Nations, such as the apprehension of war criminals and the possible extraction of reparations from Iraq, can be enforced militarily.

However, the failure of the security council to call for a ceasefire does not imply a mandate for the excessive use of force. They are still protected by the laws of war. Even if Saddam Hussein expects his soldiers to fight to the death, they must be given a reasonable opportunity to lay down their arms. This is mandated by the Hague regulations, which are now accepted as customary law, and by the universally applicable Geneva Convention. The obligation to respect the wish of enemy forces to surrender was enforced with rigour in numerous war-crime trials at the conclusion of the second world war.



An Iraqi helped: how much more should we pound his comrades?

Funeral for a high-fat diet?

Nigel Hawkes

For the past 20 years dairy products have been cast as the villain in the dietary pantomime. Throughout the Western world, men have been bullied by their wives or cajoled by their doctors into abandoning the taste for real milk and genuine butter. In their place have come thin and unconvincing low-fat substitutes, milk that tastes of calcium-and-water, spreads that insinuate themselves on to toast like an oil spill. Cheese has been cold-shouldered, cream waved away with a curl of the lip. We know better than to eat these things, for we have been told until we believe it that a high-fat diet is the quickest way to the intensive-care ward.

In this, it is consistent with the existing literature. Of seven major dietary surveys over the past 15 years, five did show a link between fat intake and heart attacks, but only a weak one; the other two showed the opposite. If the epidemic-like rise of heart disease in this century had been largely caused by dietary changes, the association should be stronger.

Consider, for example, what French specialists call *le paradoxe français*. Despite eating rather more fat and more cholesterol than either we or the Americans do, French men suffer only half as many heart deaths. Women in France do even better, with the world's lowest death rate from heart disease. Differences in smoking habits cannot account for the gap, because the French smoke about as much as we do, and nor can genetics, since France is just as rich a mix as Britain or the United States. This is not addressed in diet books, most of which skirt the inconvenient French with their croissants, pâté and full-fat cheese.

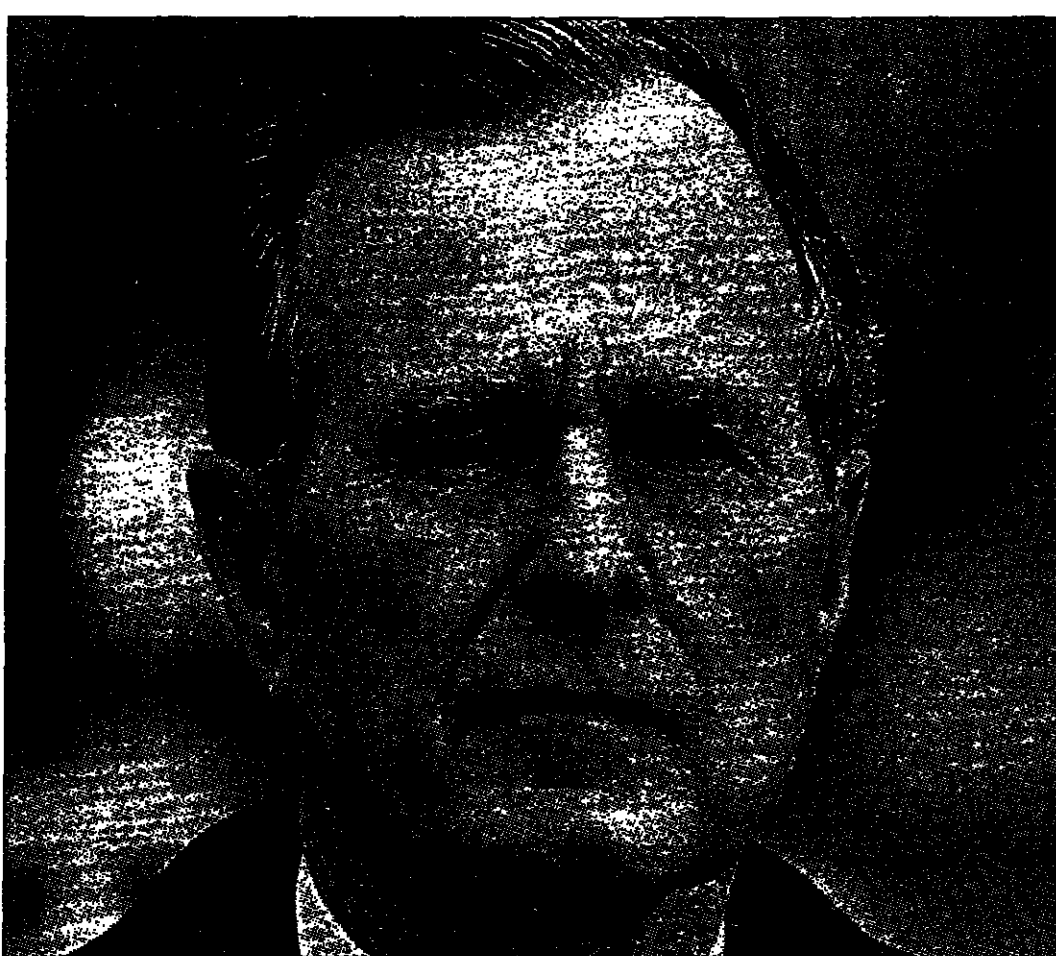
If diet is not really so central, we should expect to see only modest changes in death rates among people who do change their diets, or take drugs to reduce cholesterol. This is indeed the case. A number of major trials have now been carried out in the attempt to show that heart disease can be reduced by dietary means, with disappointing results. In several cases, the risk factors — high cholesterol, blood pressure, and so on — have been reduced, but not the thing that really matters, mortality from heart disease.

Trials of drugs that lower cholesterol levels have reduced coronary deaths slightly, but have had no effect on overall death rates. People spared heart attacks simply seem to die of other things, including violent and accidental deaths, which rose significantly in two such trials.

Dr Elwood is naturally anxious that nobody should start gobbling milk and butter, at least until his findings have been confirmed. There seems every reason, however, for a more questioning attitude among consumers so long in thrall to the dogmatists of diet.

Peter Stothard, US Editor, on a president whose re-election Saddam seems to have secured

To Bush, the spoils of war



Hail the conquering hero: Bush and the Republicans look an unstoppable electoral force

begin the presidential campaign, Democrat aspirants ought to be falling over one another in the farmyard trails around Burlington and Des Moines. Instead, there is a quiet in the cornfields which lowers find mildly affronting. There was no queue of Democrats waiting to take on Mr Bush even when it looked as if the president might be heading for disaster in the Gulf. Now the sole declared candidate is George McGovern, the man Richard Nixon humiliated in 1972.

Others will come forward in time but the field is thin. The party's senior senators, Sam Nunn of Georgia and George Mitchell of

Maine, have added a vote against the war to their previous hand-caps of paralyzing dullness. Senator Bill Bradley, the perennial Washington favourite, who barely escaped a mauling by his own electorate last November, has done nothing during the war to mend his reputation.

Senator Al Gore of Tennessee backed the war but took so long to do so, and meanwhile spent on his doubts in capital letters, that he hardly looks a serious threat. New York's governor, Mario Cuomo, has been calling for a quick return from desert politics to politics at home, but the success of Mr Bush's war management simply

highlights the failures of governors, such as Mr Cuomo, to manage their own affairs so well.

Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, survivor of the Dukakis rout of 1988, may get a chance in the top slot this time, while younger and wiser men wait for a try at a new Republican in 1996, whom they hope will be Dan Quayle but may well now be a more substantial figure. The chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, Colin Powell, haunts all hopefuls for the highest office as the war against Saddam Hussein comes to an end.

In the eyes of Republicans, almost the whole Democrat party can be tarred with the accusation of

...and moreover CLEMENT FREUD

Now you all have a terrific day, said the clerk standing at position seven of the Dynasty car-rental desk to a nun and her granny, and they walked away, and he shouted: "Next".

(I had arrived at Los Angeles airport, realised that my travel agent's car-hire voucher was for a firm unrepresented within the complex, waited in the street for a Dynasty courtesy coach in which I loped from terminal to terminal before being decanted with its load of putative customers at the company's office situated in a distant suburb. As the coach slowed and stopped there was frantic activity while we all attempted to emerge before each other. I came fifth, took my place in the queue.)

"I am next," I said.

"Well, what do you know? How are you?" said the clerk with a warmth and enthusiasm that on our side of the Atlantic is reserved for intimate friends. I thought of telling him about my gout (better), decided against, told him I was good. "Good" is the required US reply to "How you doing?"

"Here," I said, "is a voucher for a seven day car-hire deal that goes with a ticket I purchased."

"You've come to the right guy," said the clerk.

This surprised me, for I had rather thought that car-hire company employees were recipients of heavy commission based on sales and would find a pre-paid, ready-made deal a waste of time, galling. This man was ungalled.

He examined my voucher and began by explaining that it was comprehensive — except for tax. I agreed tax.

Then gas. There was this rather special deal, exclusive to Dynasty clients, whereby rather than returning the car with its tank holding the quantity it held upon taking possession, you paid \$12.76 at the astonishing advantageous rate of 90 cents a gallon and stopped worrying.

I agreed. I had not come to LA to worry about the level of my petrol tank.

We discussed a whole flummery of offers: the February bargain, dollar-a-day per named extra driver; a low-low opportunity to rent a child's chair, a roof rack, skis, and then discussed the time when I would return the car (that cost more) and moved smoothly to insurance. My voucher, I suggested, presumably provided cover. He gave qualified assent.

Five minutes later, thanks to the good man and at a cost of only \$10.95 a day plus tax I have what S. Hussein would call the mother of an accident policy: my personal liability is no longer the chancy \$100,000 per injury, \$300,000 per incident plus \$25,000 property damage that is carried by others, but represents a more realistic top limit of a million bucks, plus unlimited compensation were I to be hit by a driver who was too short-sighted to invest in the wonderful policy I carry. If I should take passengers (the clerk said: "You never know") they too are

Golden shots of Tokyo

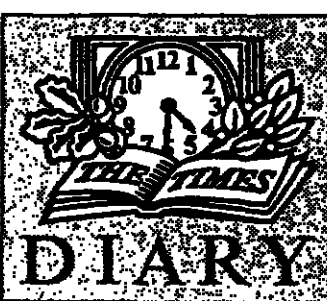
Anti-terrorist officers hunting the IRA team who carried out the recent bomb attacks in London could do worse than turn to a Japanese film crew for advice.

On the morning the mortars were launched on Downing Street from a van in Whitehall, the three-man crew from the Japanese quiz show *Joshiki Hi Joshiki* (Common Sense of the World) were yards away filming passers-by for a slot in the show which asked the question: "How do British gentlemen dress?" The crew heard the explosion, saw the bombers make their escape on a motorcycle and were filming the blazing van long before police arrived on the scene. Subsequently their pictures were sold to television stations around the world.

The following week, the crew were asked to supply footage of rush-hour commuters to illustrate the question: "Why do British people like to dress the same?" The obvious setting was a main-line railway station, and the crew set up their cameras at Victoria on a busy Monday morning. Within minutes, the station concourse was rocked by the lethal IRA explosion.

This time none of the American news channels would buy the footage, says Tamara Henriques, head of research at Tele-Search, the company that organised the trip. "The Americans believed that the Japanese crew had some sort of contract to film the IRA in the same way that they said CNN appeared to have a deal with Saddam Hussein."

The good news for those who might care to give a wide berth to future locations chosen by the crew is that they have returned to Tokyo. The bad news is that they will be back next month for a further series.



Another sign that Saddam Hussein's days are numbered. A greetings card bearing his signature was sold in Nottingham yesterday for £220, five or six times the expected price. "Collectors don't distinguish between fame and infamy," says auctioneer Nigel Kirk. "The bidders clearly felt that this particular autograph could be about to acquire a distinct scarcity value."

Queue for Kuwait

A senior member of the government will fly to Kuwait City to congratulate British troops on their role in the liberation, probably early next week. There is still some debate within Whitehall circles about which minister will make the trip, but a Foreign Office source says: "The first visit is likely to take place within days of the fighting ending. It will be a tonic for the troops. The prime minister or defence secretary are clearly best qualified for that."

Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, apparently accepts that he will not make the first trip, but he is likely to be an early visitor as part of a trade mission. The Foreign Office is also apparently determined to ensure that its man arrives in the Gulf before Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, who wants to supervise Britain's contribution to cleaning up the environmental disaster the Iraqis have left behind.

Whoever is first will have been beaten by Michael Weston, the ambassador to Kuwait, who plans to be back at his desk tomorrow. "We hope that the last diplomat to leave will also be the first back in," says an FO source, who hints that the politicians could also be upstaged by a lightning royal visit. "Prince Charles visited the troops just before the war began and a return visit by a senior member of the royal family at such an early opportunity would be a perfect answer to critics of their war role."

Tread carefully

Westminster Abbey's decision to roll back the carpet and reveal a 13th-century mosaic pavement, on view to the public over the next three days, has wrought havoc on the abbey's role as a place of active worship. The high altar has been left marooned, and nobody, parishioner or archbishop, will be allowed to set foot on the 20 sq ft of historic pavement in front of it.

The pavement's flagstones, laid by Henry III in 1268, sport purple porphyry from Egypt and multi-

coloured marble from Italy, arranged in five circles. "The mosaic is quite dilapidated and is normally protected by a carpet. So the whole area in front of the altar is

Treasure hunt

Whatever else the Iraqi scorched earth policy may have destroyed, the Kuwaitis are increasingly confident that they will be able to recover the great al-Sabah art collection, for which many had feared. The Kuwaiti government in exile says it has information that suggests the treasure, one of the finest collections of Middle Eastern art, has been removed but kept intact by the Iraqi antiquities and heritage department.

Experts believe that the Iraqi officials who removed material formerly housed in Kuwait's Dar Al Athar Al Islamiya museum, have acted honourably. Nicholas Postgate, of the oriental studies faculty at Cambridge, says: "We have heard that the Iraqis themselves have made meticulous lists of the treasures. They have behaved in a responsible manner, even if their leaders have not."

The Kuwaiti government will insist on the return of all 20,000 items after the war, and even now is checking its inventory and film records to ensure none escapes its attention. Their work has been hampered by the disappearance of the original museum catalogue, but a duplicate copy has been found and is now kept under constant guard. "Its location is confidential," says the private office of Sheikh al-Sabah, a nephew of the Emir, who owns the collection.

A colleague returns from France with a tasty little bottle of a 1988 Chardonnay bearing the name "Thatcher" bought in a Cherbours hypermarket. Alas, he offers the bottle the label but describes the bottle's contents as "dry with a hint of tartness". How will this year's vintage turn out?



coloured marble from Italy, arranged in five circles. "The mosaic is quite dilapidated and is normally protected by a carpet. So the whole area in front of the altar is



WHEN TO STOP

American and other generals have secured for the allies a famous military victory in the Gulf. Nobody needs sleep over President Saddam Hussein's repeated half-concessions to allied ultimatums. All five members of the United Nations Security Council rejected his latest version yesterday and endorsed the allied demand for "unconditional acceptance" of all 12 UN resolutions. With each new military reverse, he has accepted the last deadline but one. He has continued his Scud attacks. He has allowed his tank commanders to fight on. Not even now has he acknowledged the scale of his defeat or responded to the insistence of the UN that he draw a line under this disastrous chapter in Iraq's history.

The second of the two general allied objectives, the security council's requirement in resolution 678 that the Gulf area be rendered peaceful and secure, was deliberately drawn to permit the widest possible interpretation. Under it, American, British and French units have driven deep into Iraq, have engaged the Republican Guard round Basra and have established a line to impede and disarm Iraqi units retreating from Kuwait. It is plain that Saddam, whatever he may say, constitutes a continuing threat to Kuwait and that the Republican Guard is the substantial part of that threat. Even if he were to accept, as he eventually must, all last week's allied conditions for ceasefire, some longer-term threat would remain.

Mr Bush previously stated, on many occasions, that he did not intend to wage a general war on Iraq or seek the overthrow of its leader, much though the latter would please him. Now that Kuwait has been liberated and the Iraqi invader forced back across the border, he is confronted with a widely predicted dilemma. What should he do next?

Mr Bush might have been wiser to state clearly, for the benefit of the rest of the world, that he always regarded the demilitarisation of southern Iraq as a war objective. As it is, the impression of a "hidden agenda" has revived. Continued attacks on civilian infrastructure targets in and around Baghdad no longer serve any obvious military goal. If they are only intended to demoralise the population, even to trigger the overthrow of Saddam himself, they should cease.

Since the possessor of such insuperable might can do anything he likes, where

should he stop? The danger for Mr Bush and other allied leaders is that, flush with success, they will allow themselves to be sucked by Iraq into capping military success with political error; that they will be seduced by their presence on Iraqi soil and by the economic anarchy unleashed by their bombers into setting the terms of Iraq's future. American and allied troops can defeat Iraq militarily, as the British defeated General Galtieri. But the British did not topple him, his folly did. The Americans apparently intend to disarm the Republican Guard by destroying or removing its weapons and occupying southern Iraq. But do they demand Saddam's personal surrender and trial for war crimes and install their own regime in his place?

The Americans have denied any desire to advance on Baghdad. But escalation of war aims is a familiar syndrome of victory. Much nonsense has been talked about not upsetting long-term relations between the West and the Arab states when the war is over. A feature of the region is that relations are conditioned by short-term self-interest and can survive most shocks. At the same time, it cannot be in the West's interest, nor that of the United Nations as a consensus organisation, for the Gulf war to be presented by America's latest enemies in the Middle East as a ploy to insert American puppet regimes. Such a regime in Baghdad, the beneficiary of military conquest, would be wholly unstable without continuing American support.

The topping of Saddam is a worthy political objective. But it can hardly be achieved by military action short of an intervention that goes way beyond the United Nations mandate. Such an intervention would strain pan-Arab tolerance to the limit. Saddam has not yet acceded to the full list of allied requirements for ceasefire. But if he does so, Mr Bush and other allied leaders will need to move with extreme caution. Iraq's leadership has not necessarily lost its cohesion or its cunning. Its territory has been occupied and its army beaten, but the quagmire remains, the swamp into which countless Western powers have toppled by their incautious involvement in this benighted region. America too must know when enough is enough, when it is sensible to halt.

KUWAIT'S FRESH START

With the retreat of Iraqi troops, Kuwait is reborn as a sovereign state. Its government will be tempted to defer questions about what kind of a state that will be while urgent practical tasks are carried out. Formally, the restitution of Kuwait's sovereignty, the central demand of the United Nations, must mean exactly what it says. If Iraq's leadership is held to be a matter for Iraqis, external intervention in the affairs of Kuwait in the aftermath of Iraq's invasion cannot be justified.

The prime minister, Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah al-Sabah, reacted icily yesterday to proposals by opposition politicians to hold a conference in London next week with representatives of American, British and French political parties. For the sake of its relations with the Arab world, the West must tread with care to avoid the appearance of neo-colonialism. Yet Iraq's invasion last August only deferred the conclusion of a spirited political battle for the restitution of constitutional rights in Kuwait. Reformers as impatient as the outside world for the Emir, Sheikh Jaber Ahmed al-Sabah, to make good his pledge this week to give the people a greater role in political life.

There is no domestic challenge to the legitimacy of the ruling al-Sabah family, but many Kuwaitis believe that this moment is their best chance to entrench political reforms. They would welcome discreet Western pressure, above all since Kuwait's Gulf neighbours, who even before the invasion considered the emirate dangerously modern in its political thinking, are far from enthusiastic about the rapid democratisation of Kuwaiti life.

The declaration of martial law issued on Tuesday need not be inauspicious. The country is in chaos, its administrative structure dismantled by the Iraqis and its records largely destroyed. Streets and houses must be cleared of mines, essential services such as water restored and — a task which will take many months — work begun on

capping the fires raging in two thirds of the country's oil wells. Kuwait's human wounds will also take time to heal. Its people have been terrorised. At least 7,000 have, according to estimates accepted by the Foreign Office, been killed; at least another 17,000 are missing, possibly hostages in Iraq. There is documented proof of appalling tortures inflicted by Iraqi secret police. Martial law may be necessary to prevent revenge killings of Palestinians. Many helped the resistance, but a minority collaborated, even forming militias and acting as informers.

Yet martial law will be more acceptable if accompanied by a timetable for the restoration of democracy. Kuwait was not a feudal tyranny. By contrast with its neighbours, it has a quasi-democratic constitution dating back to 1962 under which six national assemblies have been elected since independence in 1961. That constitution was suspended by the Emir in 1986, when he also disbanded the national assembly and imposed censorship on what had been the freest press in the Arab world.

Before August 2, opposition demands centred on the restoration of these rights. Today, a return to the 1962 constitution is only a starting point. The franchise is too narrow, excluding all but 65,000 Kuwaiti males who trace their citizenship to before 1920. Women, who have for some time held senior executive positions, should be given the vote, as should long-term residents of Kuwait who, at great personal risk, demonstrated their solidarity with Kuwait during the occupation.

The Emir promised this week that Kuwait would change. A brutal occupation in which many Kuwaitis forgot narrow tribal loyalties has already seen to that. The West can now encourage the accountability and participation which the country will need as it embarks on its reconstruction. But this second liberation is for Kuwaitis themselves to bring about.

A SUIT IN THE STREET

John Major is fast evolving his own distinctive style of presentation. Unlike previous prime ministers, he is not relying on private press briefings or televised confrontations in the House of Commons to communicate with the public. He has punctured his theatrical pomposity and substituted the common or garden street, or at least Downing Street.

Mr Major is seen daily chatting with unseen interrogators, grey of hair and grey of suit, with a backdrop of dark Georgian brickwork, railings and a deferential policeman. His answers are unadorned but clear and positive. The image is of a doctor on his way to a house call, caught by a passing camera and offering brisk reassurance before hurrying on his way.

The new style is not without risks. Mr Major eschews the colour-coordinated backdrop, lectern and microphones of a Washington news conference. He is vulnerable to the confusion of shouted questions and excessively spontaneous answers, and to the hesitant final smile and nervous glance that can spoil the effect as he turns to leave. By performing in the open air, his voice loses its

bass register and can sound thin. Hair can be blown in the wind and hand-held lights can cast unflattering shadows.

These cosmetic hazards do not worry him. He has a remarkable ability to speak grammatically without notes. He is learning how to end each interview crisply and step back through the open door (a stagey manoeuvre fraught with danger). He is clearly in control of his environment, unlike the raucous Commons where assertion means shouting down a hubbub. There is rarely scope there for a coherent message.

Downing Street is not a rostrum on the White House lawn, from which President Bush now likes to hurl his thunderbolts with a backdrop of white Palladian splendour. But then Mr Major is not a head of state, an imperial leader or even an orator. He is "grey", but his greyness is not that of dullness but of reassurance. His message is a reasonable and modest one, as befits the leader of a reasonable and modest country. It is a message from the man in the street to the man in the street. Where better to convey it than from Britain's most famous street?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Geneva rules put Example on pay set from the top

From the Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry

Sir, Geoffrey Robinson writes (February 25) of the need for top management to set an example on pay, and calls on the CBI to show how many of its members have done that.

The important example that needs to be set is that pay at all levels (including in the boardroom) should reflect the performance of the business over the longer term. In line with the economic down-turn, the CBI's pay database is currently recording the biggest quarterly fall in settlements in manufacturing industry for four years.

Other recent surveys show that the pay of senior executives in Britain is falling further down the international league tables, even though the UK share of world manufactured exports has been rising continuously over the past few years and we continue to export more per capita than Japan, for instance.

Our members are well aware that any board of directors can expect to be challenged unless the relationship

between directors' pay and the results in the most recent annual report is very clear and defensible.

As the first controller of the Audit Commission I introduced performance-related pay to the local government audit service and insisted that increases in my pay reflected solely the commission's view of my performance in achieving its strategic objectives. I refused, therefore, to accept the so-called top peoples' pay awards, even though my compensation was substantially lower than it had been in the private sector.

Since I have been director-general of the CBI my compensation has been determined on precisely the same basis: the judgment of our presidents on my personal performance. That is the way it should be and increasingly is throughout British business.

Yours faithfully,
J. M. M. BANHAM,
Director-General,
Confederation of British Industry,
103 New Oxford Street, WC1.
February 26.

Poll tax 'agony'

From Mr Ralph Howell, MP for Norfolk North (Conservative)

Sir, There is no way to make the poll tax fair, workable or acceptable. It must be scrapped, before April 1, in order to save us from another 12 months of political agony and farce.

We must repeal the community charge legislation with a single clause repealing Bill. This could be put through both Houses of Parliament in one day, if necessary, and the lost revenue should be replaced immediately with an extra 1 per cent on VAT.

This would mean everybody would pay, and everybody would pay according to their spending and, thus, according to their ability to pay. Food, housing costs etc., would of course be exempt, as is the case with the 15 per cent VAT we already pay.

I have estimated that a person with an annual income of £3,000

would pay between £70 and £100; a person earning £10,000 would pay between £200 and £250 and a person with an income of £20,000 would pay between £400 and £500.

The advantages would be enormous and immediate. There would be no registration, no exemptions, no prosecutions, no extra bureaucracy. There would be a saving of over £1 billion which the poll tax is costing to collect and local government expenditure would be brought firmly under central government control, as it must be if we are ever to stop the excesses of local government.

Time is running out. The prime minister must act decisively and act now. If he struggles on with the poll tax in any shape or form for another year, he will meet the fate of his predecessor.

Yours faithfully,
RALPH HOWELL,
House of Commons.
February 21.

An editor's rejoinder

From the Editor of The Sunday Times

Sir, I hesitate to return to the matter of the royal family and the Gulf war, since the matter, as judged by every measure of public opinion and the subsequent behaviour of the royals, has been so clearly resolved in our favour. But Woodrow Wyatt (February 27) is so discomfited by anything less than fawning praise of the royals that it has impaired his ability to read.

He writes that *The Sunday Times* "attacked the Queen". In fact, our editorial said "The Queen, of course, has behaved impeccably". He then goes on to say that this mythical attack was inspired by

"fantasies of the Queen's personal riches". In fact, the editorial described reports claiming the Queen earned £1.8m a day as "probably wrong, because it includes many royal assets which properly belong to the State...". We simply argued that, whatever the income, it should be taxed.

Since he can muster nothing of substance he is reduced to a malicious and spiteful attack on me, more fitting for his *News of the World* column. Readers can make up their own minds of its relevance.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW F. NEIL,
Editor, *The Sunday Times*,
1 Pennington Street, E1.
February 27.

Clergy in waiting

From Mr Peter Carver

Sir, I served as a churchwarden for 20 years, in which time there was only one interregnum, lasting nine months (letters, February 18, 20). That period of sequestration could have been further reduced had the various prospective incumbents decided to accept the offer of the benefice. This, presumably, has suited the eventual (and present) appointment, made in 1970.

In keeping with canonical obedience, is it not time the clergy were told where to go and when to go?

Yours faithfully,
PETER CARVER,
The Croft, North Cave,
East Yorkshire.
February 20.

From Mr H. F. Purkess

Sir, Interregnum — why the fuss? Neighbouring and retired clergy cheerfully look after spiritual needs, the bishop steps in sometimes, whilst laymen can take up their duties to organize the parish house-keeping, perhaps for the first time.

Past clergy are better appreciated, new incumbents are delighted, and freed to get on with pastoral work.

Yours etc,
HUGH F. PURKESS,
Welsley Cottage, Perrotts Brook,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire.
February 20.

From Dr D. E. C. Eversley

Sir, The community forest now accepted in principle for south Hertfordshire and London poses a threat not mentioned by Ms Shoard. What worries us, as a county conservation society, is that the sums mentioned so far do not pay anything like the costs of compensating landowners for giving up income from farms, planting trees, and providing access — not to speak of compensation for dispossessed tenant farmers.

Afforestation of agricultural land within the Green Belt is a costly business. Until the countryside and forestry commissions, and the planning authorities, can assure us that they will not spoil large tracts of the Green Belt to meet the opportunity costs of planting trees, there will be opposition, and not just from ecologists like Marion Shoard.

Yours faithfully,
D. E. C. EVERSLEY
(Joint honorary director),
The Hertfordshire Conservation Society,
29a Mill Lane,
Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

Heritage threat to Westminster site

From Mrs Christopher Patten and others

Sir, The Court of Appeal has recently ruled that the requirement to pay "special attention" to a conservation area's character should be the first consideration for those making planning decisions in such an area (report, February 7). The City of Westminster is about to deal with a planning application where this question arises in a sharply focused way.

The archdiocese of Westminster has applied to build a four-storey, multi-purpose building which will cover 1,830 square feet in the south-west corner of the Westminster Cathedral conservation area. This architecturally undistinguished building requires the demolition of a recently (and controversially) demolished cottage and changes fundamentally the views around the precincts of the cathedral. It would increase traffic within the conservation area and, far from preserving and enhancing the area's character, would be a gross intrusion into it.

Hardly surprisingly, English Heritage, the Royal Fine Art Commission and the Victorian Society have opposed the plans. Yet the archdiocese has ploughed on — even suggesting the possibility of other developments in the cathedral precincts. A private developer behaving similarly would be roundly condemned.

It is in the interest of the reputation of the archdiocese, as a custodian of its great inheritance, that it should withdraw the scheme. Failing that, we hope we can look to Westminster City Council or the Department of the Environment to act to preserve an important part of our heritage.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER PATTEN,
ROY STRONG,
ELISE JANNER,
Morpeth Mansions,
Morpeth Terrace, SW1.
February 25.

Soviet future

From Mr Charles Janson

Sir, Anatole Kaletsky, in his article "Stay out of the Soviet infighting" (February 20), concludes that "the West must make clear that any boycott of the Kremlin is a response to human rights abuses and not an attempt to redraw the Soviet Union's boundaries or interfere in its internal affairs".

This, surely, is a false distinction. Any intervention by the West, including one over human rights, will be presented to the Soviet public as an interference. Paranoia is indivisible.

Fortunately, however, more and more Soviet people wish to break with their past and live under genuine law and in freedom, a system which contains the right to own and develop private property. The same Soviet people will, as we must, support republican movements for self-determination. A quarter of a million of them recently demonstrated in Moscow; and millions more listen to the now de-jammed Radio Liberty.

Of course the threatened Soviet establishment will do anything to prevent the true westernisation of the Soviet Union. In this respect they are much more determined than their Tsarist predecessors, whose will to rule snapped. But they are doomed because there are no goods, human or material, that they can deliver.

I suggest that both Soviet well-being and Western security will be best served by our steady insistence on the inevitability of westernisation. Is this an indecent rejoinder to 70 years of insistence by the Kremlin that nothing could stop the communisation of the whole world?

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES JANSON,
39 Edwards Square, W8.
February 21.

No sleight of palm

From Mr M. J. Foxley

Sir, My council, with the help of the Prince's Trust for Cornwall, have planted over 2,000 trees of various varieties in addition to the palms which your brief report (February 21) alleges are intended "to make tourists believe that temperatures are warmer than they actually are".

Severe winters have taken their toll of Penwith's mature palms and other exotic vegetation which flourish in the mild climate of the extreme south west.

Yours faithfully,
M. J. FOXLEY (Tourism and Publicity Officer),
Penwith District Council,
St Clare,
Penzance, Cornwall.
February 21.

Palace of varieties

From Mrs Brenda M. Boyd

Sir, Princess Alexandra's residence is named in the Court Circular this morning as Thatchers House Lodge. May we now expect other royal residences to update their names to late-twentieth century political figures — Buckingham Palace, for example, or Kenilworth Palace?

Yours etc,
BRENDA M. BOYD,
8 Templemead,
Weybridge, Surrey.
February 27.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

16 Peeping Tom (6)
20 Cleverness (3)
21 Pig grunt (4)

Mark 11 Horse
rd 21 Prominent
r of love 7 Humpty
ent 19 Corn 22 Tab

Switch to a new generation game

Would you welcome sharing a mini-power station in your own back garden or basement with the neighbours if it were more efficient, cleaner, safer and environmentally friendlier than conventional equipment?

The idea of a small energy system to supply a street of houses, a block of flats, a factory or offices is being suggested as a solution to the problems of fossil-fuel burners and the politics of nuclear power.

Today, energy consultants who say small is beautiful are attending a London conference, where they will hear of several commissions for mini-power stations, which indicate that industry and institutions are beginning to view them as serious options.

Small power stations, in their simplest form, consist of an engine, similar to that in a commercial lorry, with its support equipment, sited in the basement of an apartment block or group of dwellings is far more acceptable than huge smoke stacks or the risk of the breakdown of a large power station, which could affect hundreds of thousands of people.

Support is mounting for mini-power stations, which normally use almost all the heat and power generated, instead of allowing large amounts to escape.

Last week Thames Water awarded a £2.5 million contract for a self-contained project to recycle organic waste, known tech-

The idea of domestic power stations is now taken seriously. Angela Long looks at home-grown energy

nically as biomass, that is piped into sewage plants. The gas given off by the organic waste will be used to power other plant equipment.

The City of London corporation has commissioned a mini-unit that works on the combined heat and power (CHP) method to heat and light 12 properties at a £25 million capital cost. The project is overseen by Citigen, the joint venture between British Gas and Utilicom, of France.

The Mayday Hospital in Croydon, south London, has broken ground with its contract for a mini-power station that the manufacturers say will save more than £30,000 a year.

The energy department, in a discussion paper published last year, welcomed the concept of mini-stations. The department says CHP could supply 30,000 megawatts of Britain's power needs by the year 2020, given government support. That would be between 25 and 50 per cent of the capacity expected by then.

Some large corporations, including Shell, ICI and Mobil, are

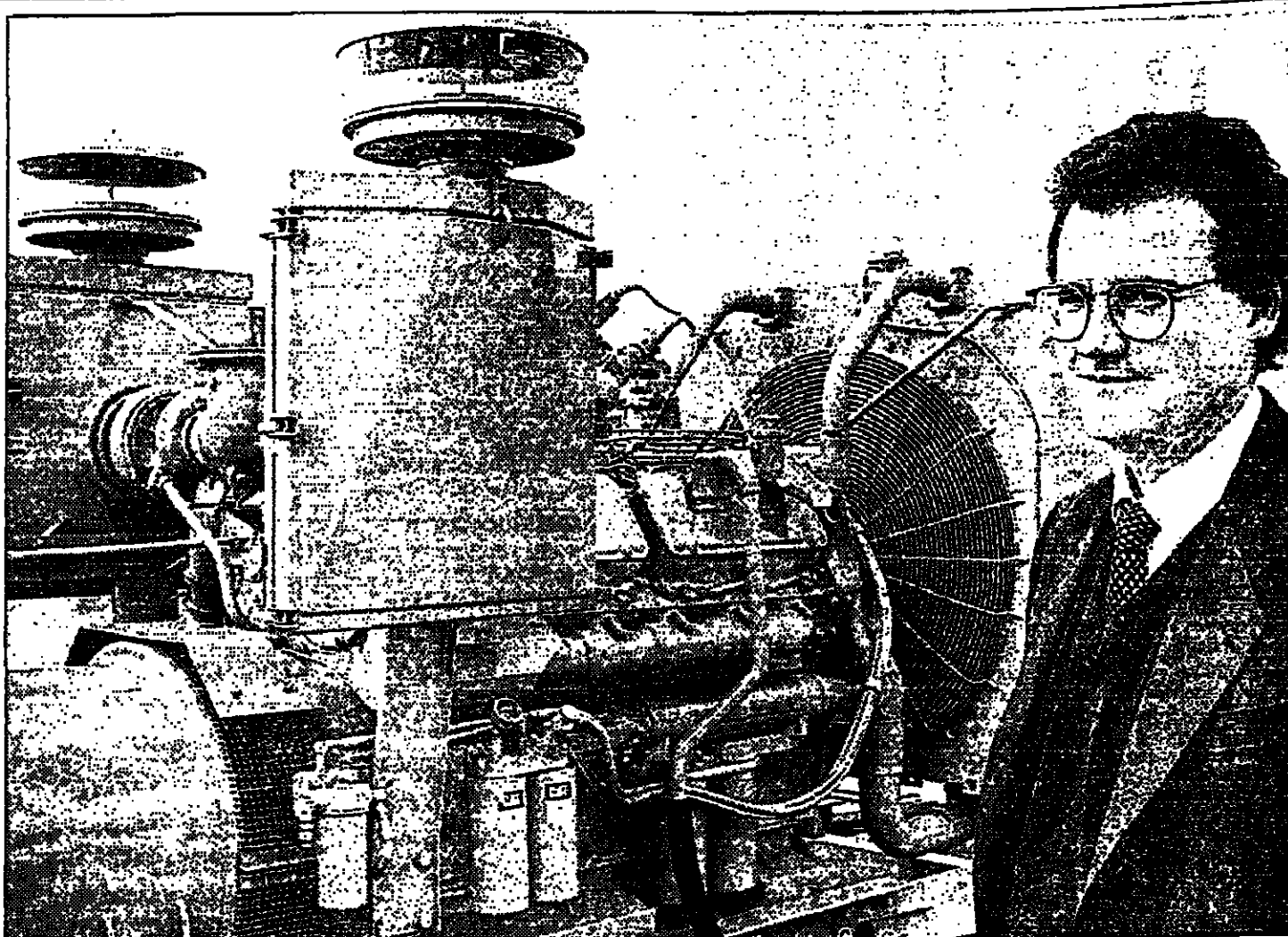
showing interest in the CHP method, which can operate on a small or large scale.

David Andrews, an energy consultant, of Bath, Avon, describes a mini-power station as simply an engine driving a generator. He says: "Instead of dissipating the heat, which cooling towers do on conventional power stations, it uses the heat to warm the building. You could generate all the power Britain needs from mini-stations. Being realistic, however, I do not expect to see that come about, but the generation of five gigawatts (five billion watts) is possible in the next few years."

Mr Andrews says the standard 875-kilowatt engine in most existing mini-stations could give five megawatts of power. After that gas turbines are needed to complement the system.

The Mini Power Station Information Group claims that National Power and PowerGen together produce 40 per cent of Britain's carbon dioxide emissions. The group says mini-power stations near or in buildings are three times as efficient as they use inherent waste heat for water or space heating, and could reduce emissions by about 35 per cent.

As privatisation is imminent, the time is hardly right to advise local electricity boards to overhaul dramatically their structure and hardware. However, PowerGen and National Power teams are



Mini-source of heat and light: energy consultant David Andrews with a unit that is said to be more efficient than larger power stations

assessing mini-power stations. Another advantage of small power stations is that they are quicker and easier to construct. The current issue of *Electrical Review* estimates that a small CHP station could be built and commissioned in less than six months, compared with the three to five years for a large power station.

H. Leverton, of Windsor, Berkshire, a dealer in Caterpillar engines, is carrying out the first installation of this kind of generating equipment in Britain in the basement of the Mayday Hospital. Under the agreement with the hospital, Leverton takes responsibility for design, installation, operation and maintenance. The

company is bearing the £400,000 capital cost of installing the engine, but recovers its investment by selling the heat and power generated to the hospital. The scheme has the approval of energy consultants.

Colin Boughton-Smith, of Energy Control, which the Croydon health authority commissioned to

investigate alternatives, says: "The problem with mini-schemes at the moment is that there is no incentive for individuals or utilities to adopt them." Another setback lies in the "top-up" of electricity from the main grid that is regularly required to supplement mini-systems. At the moment the cost is punitive, he says.

How to set a bug to catch a bug

TWO engineers have developed a new way of detecting insect larvae in fruit or grain. They use sensitive microphones to listen to the munching. Dr Robert Hickling, of the National Centre for Physical Acoustics at Mississippi University, says the noise is a "distinct chewing sound, rather like standing next to a horse eating hay".

The development could help customs officers to prevent the importing of pests, and could be used by the grain industry to devise better protection of stored crops. A tenth of the grain stored in the United States is lost to pests every year. In the developing world the proportion could be 50

Microphones are to be used to catch the crop-destroying larvae at lunch

per cent. At present, fruit is checked at borders by cutting open samples. This, however, is unreliable. Listening for larvae ought to be more effective, if a system can be made sensitive enough to hear the crunching of their tiny jaws. The idea has been around since the Twenties, but it needed mod-

ern electronics to make it work. Dr J.C. Webb, an American agriculture department engineer, first detected the sound of insects moving around inside wheat kernels and grapefruit in the early Eighties. A roomful of equipment costing thousands of dollars was used. Now Dr Webb and Dr Hickling claim to have developed a smaller and cheaper device that is almost ready to go on the market.

Dr Hickling says the sensor, operating in a frequency band between 800 and 900 hertz, gives the loudest possible signal. Higher frequencies are mopped up by the fruit's fibrous texture.



Listening in: head of a fruit fly

The agriculture department has concentrated on sensors to detect pests in grain. At present, investigators find them by shaking a kilogram of grain through a sieve.

Dr Hickling expects the sensors to cost only a few pounds and the associated electronics less than £25.

NIGEL HAWKES

Medical research at the double

MEDICAL and psychiatric research involving thousands of pairs of twins in Britain is being expanded through a new national unit whose establishment is announced today.

Identical and non-identical twins offer researchers many insights into the hereditary and environmental causes of illnesses, disorders and behaviour. Studies are helping to reveal the role of genes in coronary artery disease and diabetes, and psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia and manic depression.

The National Twin Research Unit is being set up by the Institute of Psychiatry and King's College

Hospital medical school in Camberwell, south London. The unit will use two existing registers of twins, consisting of more than 5,000 pairs, and hopes to enrol a further 10,000 pairs.

Robin Murray, the professor of psychological medicine at the institute, says: "The immense value of twins in scientific research rests on simple observations. Identical twins are the result of the division of a single-fertilised egg, and so share all their genetic material. Any differences must be due to the differential action of environmental factors. In contrast, non-identical twins, apart from having shared a womb and being

the same age, are no more alike than brothers and sisters.

"Comparisons of identical and non-identical twins can be used to explore the nature of both normal human development and the causes of important diseases."

Professor Murray, who gives a public lecture at the medical school today on the contribution of twins to medical and psychiatric research, says studies on alcoholism, skin cancer, obesity and back pain would be aided by the new unit. He adds: "We expect to contribute to big advances in the understanding of mechanisms of health and disease."

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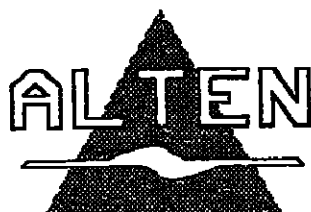
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Attractive Bonus scheme

Building martial hearts

T'ai chi, the gentle Chinese art, is being tested as a therapy for heart attack victims. Thomson Prentice reports

In its search for better ways to help patients recover from a heart attack, modern medicine is turning to an ancient form of exercise. The old and the new came together this week at the start of a research project to test the healing power of t'ai chi, a gentle branch of Chinese martial arts.

The first volunteers, men aged between 45 and 60 who have had an attack in the past few months, are being led by a qualified instructor through the slow, elaborate and elegant movements that characterise the discipline. The patients are taking part in a study that aims to show whether t'ai chi is more or less effective than a conventional fitness programme in enabling them to regain their health and self-confidence.

A generation ago, the standard treatment for heart attack victims was strict bed rest in hospital. During the lengthy convalescence that followed, physical activity was meant to be not much more than a morning stroll, and doctors warned that "overdoing it" could provoke another attack.

Today, heart victims are discharged more quickly from hospital, and encouraged to join cardiac rehabilitation programmes, and to take up exercise to a degree that many of them may not have known for years. The hope is that their lives will be enhanced, if not extended, as a result.

Few of the patients taking part in the study at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield, know anything about t'ai chi. Although practised by millions of Chinese, it has little more than a cult following in Britain. The origins of t'ai chi go back at least to the 14th century, when Taoist monks replaced the aggressiveness of martial arts with a softer form that they believed

would integrate body, mind and spirit. The goal was a balance between yin and yang, the active and passive life forces in Chinese philosophy.

The belief that illness stems from an imbalance of these forces or energy patterns is central to traditional Chinese medicine. Acupuncture is one method of restoring the balance; t'ai chi is another.

The movements, performed in silence, are regarded as antidotes to stress and anxiety as well as improving posture, flexibility and breathing.

"In China t'ai chi is widely accepted as being excellent for overall health, especially the functioning of the heart and regulation of blood pressure," says David Barrow, aged 43, who is training the patients in Sheffield.

Unlike aerobic exercise, t'ai chi does not significantly raise the pulse, but dilates blood vessels through relaxation, Mr Barrow says. He qualified as a t'ai chi instructor in Malaysia in 1974, and now runs classes in several British cities.

"When I heard about the cardiac rehabilitation programme at the Royal Hallamshire, I suggested that the hospital should give this method a trial," he says.

The idea was taken up by Kevin Chanmer, a consultant cardiologist, and Margaret Osborne, a cardiac rehabilitation nurse, at the hospital. "During the next two months we will have some patients going through t'ai chi classes, while others have standard exercises and a third group are simply given advice about diet, exercise and smoking," Dr Chanmer says. "Then we will compare the three groups, measuring their physical improvement and changes in their levels of anxiety and depression, to see whether one fares better than the other."

One of the first t'ai chi volunteers at the hospital is

'I will try anything that will make me feel I have recovered'



Balancing act: Dave Barrow leads Hallamshire patients through t'ai chi movements

John Rooke, aged 48, who blames his heart attack on the pressures of running his own business. "I had no interest in any exercise of this kind, although I used to play tennis and squash regularly before my illness," he says. "The classes make me feel pleasantly relaxed and I'm enjoying them, but it will be some time before I can tell whether they are doing me any good."

Derek Tolan, aged 45, a water operations manager in Sheffield, says: "I'm willing to try anything that will make me feel I have recovered. The t'ai chi exercises are strange at first but I'm enjoying them."

Frank Wright, aged 57, a heating engineer, had his heart attack on December 28 and spent two weeks in the hospital. "The exercises have doubled my energy and I can feel the benefits long after I leave the gym. I do them at home, too, and find them very relaxing."

Sister Osborne, who supervises the sessions, says: "The aim of rehabilitation is to encourage patients to put the experience behind them and show them that they can recover completely. The psychological benefits may be at least as important as the physical ones. T'ai chi seems to offer advantages in both categories. If we find at the end of the study that it really

produces improvements, we may incorporate it permanently in our programme."

According to a study published this week by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, cardiac rehabilitation programmes result in fewer heart attack patients being readmitted to hospital because of anxieties about symptoms.

The society wants more such programmes, and Stuart Skye, its spokesman, says: "We will be interested in the outcome of the t'ai chi trial. If it helps patients relax and relieves stress, it could win a bigger following."

High-fat diets, page 12

MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttaford

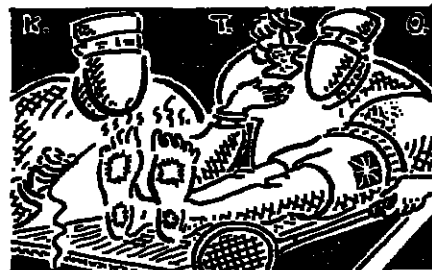
Vitamins on trial

Within days of press reports a year or two ago that a high vitamin intake improved a child's intelligence, chemists' shelves were emptied by attentive, but ambitious, parents. Since then there have been conflicting reports on the value of an enhanced multivitamin intake in developing intelligence: the original results proved difficult to reproduce, and it was suggested that any observed improvement occurred only when the pupil was already under-nourished. The latest research, featured in last night's QED programme on BBC1, claims to have excluded this possible cause of statistical bias. Discussion of intelligence, with its hint of elitism, produces savage controversy. The egalitarian instincts of many doctors prevent them from happily accepting that it can, like any other characteristic, be inherited; and the implied suggestion that the supposed healthy nourishment provided by the nursery fare of the middle classes might reinforce an inborn advantage adds fuel to the fire. The misconception that the children of the rich live on a diet carefully balanced by nanny, whereas at the other extreme children are fed on choc bars, luncheon meat, biscuits and fizzy drinks, is as untrue as it is insulting. Faulty nourishment, as opposed to under-nourishment, occurs in all social groups. It has recently been said that the children most at risk from vitamin, mineral and protein deficiency are not those fed on burgers and chips, but those mistakenly reared on the fad diet, often overloaded with fibre, of the muesli belt.



To expect that high vitamin intake would open the doors to an Oxford college is unrealistic, but a daily multivitamin and mineral tablet would provide a safety net, always provided parents realise that some vitamins are toxic when taken in excess. Your children might be at the top of their classes, but it would be disappointing if they were suffering from the liver disease, rough skin and dry hair of vitamin A overdose, or if their carefully nurtured brains were distracted by the headaches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea of excess vitamin D.

Healing under the surface



A close relationship has grown between Kuwaiti and British medicine. Kuwait's citizens come here for specialist opinions and, in the past, many British doctors and dentists have spent weeks teaching and operating in Kuwait. One British consultant, determined to remain fit there despite the oppressive heat, spent an afternoon playing squash, but a combination of his schoolboy gym shoes and heavy sweating resulted in the erosion of the soles of his feet. Doctor became patient, and a pigskin graft was needed to

repair the damage. An allograft of this sort acts as a biological dressing rather than as a transplant, for the graft does not "take".

Even better than pigskin is human skin from deceased transplant donors. Judicially used as a dressing in the treatment of severe burns, it can be life-saving; and so, anticipating heavy casualties from the Gulf, which mercifully have not materialised, the United Kingdom Transplant Service offered its expertise to British plastic surgeons to facilitate its provision. Human skin attaches itself by biochemical means to the wound so that all dead spaces, which might serve as pools for bacteria to multiply, are eliminated. Donor human skin retains the waterproofing epidermis which controls the rate at which fluid is lost from the wound, for, if it dries too quickly, the wound deepens, and as the moisture evaporates it cools the wound to a point where the white blood cells no longer operate efficiently and infection may supervene.

Culturing skin so that a graft can be made from the patient's own skin provides an even better material. This is a comparatively slow process, too slow to treat burns; but it is useful for the treatment of a wide variety of conditions, ranging from leg ulcers to the bullous skin diseases in which great blisters ravage the skin's surface.

THE LOGIC.

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CRIME

Marcel Berlins

DEATH OF A PARTNER

By Janet Neel
Constable, £12.99

lins, £12.99). Another exquisite evocation of early 20th-century Egypt under the Brits, with nationalism rising, and CID chief Captain Owen trying to track down the perpetrators of attacks on civil servants, and a bomb outrage in a café. Boorish English businessman, ubiquitous gypsy dancer-thief, and lots of politically intriguing locals get in the way.

● **And Did Murder Him**, by Peter Turnbull (Collins, £12.99). Strange how few cities in Britain make successful settings for gritty police procedurals. Manchester and Liverpool, for instance, haven't made it. Glasgow, in contrast, is a splendid cop-city, full of dark alleys, seedy pubs, distinctive culture, and ambivalent values. Turnbull is a superbly skilful chronicler of Glaswegian crime, with cops and criminals portrayed equally convincingly. Stabbed body of druggie discovered, his friend's fingerprints on a nearby knife. The evidence is too pat for the police of P Division. Further inquiries lead to a missing posh-voiced woman student, occasional resident of the deceased's squat; thence into Glasgow's respectable quarters. Pulses with authenticity and atmosphere.

● **Flynn**, by Lesley Grant-Adamson (Faber, £12.99). Laura Flynn, feisty private eye, looking into disappearance of frightened dress designer client, finds herself among dangerous stop-at-nothing property conspirators. Lesser customers include owner of missing monster cat; family matters intrude as sick granny wants to trace her son, Flynn's pa, and an ex-hubby reappears. Grant-Adamson's new heroine is stubborn, funny, irresponsible, courageous, and captivating.

● **A Small Deceit**, by Margaret Yorke (Hutchinson, £12.99). A rapist and killer, just out of prison; a minor judge with a minor secret. They recognise each other in an obscure guest house, both using false names. Gradually their lives converge, violently. The judge's long-suffering, unhappily trapped wife, his bland son and daughter-in-law, the woman with whom the killer lodges, become enmeshed. Yorke creates clammy tension in the most ordinary surroundings.

● **The Mamur Zap and The Men Behind**, by Michael Pearce (Col-

lin, £12.99). Another exquisite evocation of early 20th-century Egypt under the Brits, with nationalism rising, and CID chief Captain Owen trying to track down the perpetrators of attacks on civil servants, and a bomb outrage in a café. Boorish English businessman, ubiquitous gypsy dancer-thief, and lots of politically intriguing locals get in the way.

● **The Cruelest Month**, by Hazel Holt (Macmillan, £12.99). Oxford librarian beamed by non-accidental falling book in the Bodleian Library. Widow Sheila Mallory, back among the dreaming spires of her studenthood, accidentally embroiled in the inquiries, finds shockingly relevant clues to the killing in her own past friendships. Cosy, traditional, warm-glowish sort of whodunit: a fast disappearing genre.

● **Grave Responsibility**, by Staines & Storey (Barrie & Jenkins, £11.99). Almost Gothic tale of family loves and obsessions, leading to a doctor's bloody suicide in a car wash, and the simultaneous passing by gunshot of his mother and uncle in a decaying, secretive mansion, filled with memories, dummies, and unexplained visitors. Mama's diaries reveal long-gone scandals turned into deadly motives. The extant members of the family and their spouses and lovers, not one lacking eccentricity or malevolence, are counterpointed by the solid real-worldly Superintendent Bone. An unapologetically over-the-top tongue-in-cheek read; S & S take chances with suspension of disbelief, but sheer verve and imagination make it work.



Jennifer Johnston, with her powerful novel of a sleeping beauty still wounded by her past: worms has found out thy bed of crimson joy, and his dark secret love does thy life destroy

Something nasty in woodshed

Some memories", writes Jennifer Johnston, "are so joyful that you could bask forever in them; others you long to shove back, away, back into the darkness out of which they have sprung uninvited." In the normal course of events, growing up is an acceptance that memories, bad or good, must be marshalled into perspective, to provide a firm starting point for the next lap in life. However, incidents that traumatised prevent a natural development and cannot be absorbed, but must either be cured by the gentle science of psychiatry, or exorcised by violent means, if emotional maturity is ever to be attained.

Laura Quinlan has been blessed with beauty, wealth and social position, advantages that appear to have reconciled her complaisant husband to the fact that he is saddled with an extreme case of arrested development. She is haunted by the apparition of a woman forever on the run, and has long periods of total withdrawal when, fortunately, Teresa or Bridie or Katie or Nellie is on

Isabel Raphael on the haunting story of a plastic princess, traumatised, who cannot come to terms with a harsh world

hand to see that she comes to no actual harm. She lives in a kind of enchanted Irish backwater, a Sleeping Beauty surrounded herself with thorns, with a Prince Charming, who has turned from his dozy bride to livelier company, but is still himself enough of a victim of enchantment to indulge her childlike escape from reality. Draining her life blood is a secret wound, the memory of a day of sexual abuse and death, the day when both Laura's parents were lost to her. Not surprisingly, she cannot bear a child.

When a second death removes the need for secrecy, Laura can start to come to terms with the past. Being Protestant, she is denied the use of the confessional in her father's church. He had always hoped that her mother would turn, but she had mocked him: "Haven't you got my house and my land and my beautiful body? What makes you think you should have my soul as well?" So

his possession of mother and daughter remains tantalisingly incomplete. It is Laura's husband who brings home her "confessor", a teacher from a local boys' school who turns out to be a failed priest. Together Laura and Dominic move haltingly from safe confine-

THE INVISIBLE WORM
By Jennifer Johnston
Sinclair-Stevenson, £12.95

ment towards confrontation, the answer to the riddle of the summer-house and, at last, the understanding that they must each make their separate ways forward. My summary of this elegant novel is perhaps unkind, for there is much here to admire. Jennifer Johnston writes with her customary sensibility about a subject which genuinely creates psychological trauma, and her use of Blake's chilling verses as title and

epigraph is mastery in its implications. There are some vivid characters: Maurice, the charming, casual husband who adapts whatever life gives him to suit himself, and Laura's powerful and outwardly successful father, perpetually frustrated by knowing that his wife has a quality that will always evade him. There is also a neat, cruel and utterly real portrait of the family that rejects the former priest, as he too is freed by a parent's death to grow up in his own way. As in her earlier novels, Ms Johnston deftly handles the interplay between present and past, and the subtly different perceptions of adult and child of the same occurrences. The dialogue runs fast and free, and restores the pace lost in Laura's bouts of introspection, in which there is more than a whiff of Great Aunt Ada Doom. But two major improbabilities flaw this book, which in other respects is sympathetic and telling.

Could a teenager of the Sixties, who knows about rape and has the guts to escape for two years to an independent life abroad, enter the enchanted forest and lose herself there so completely? And could a mother, pledged to protect her child, recklessly court danger or else deliberately remove herself from the scene? "Lost at sea" is altogether too implausible and convenient an exit for so dominant a character. The mysterious summer-house might have preferred melodrama to a cop-out. It would have matched the skilful and deliberate symbolism of the secret garden, with its willows and its Wedding Tree, the paradise Laura and her confessor struggle to regain, only to find in its heart the serpent, the invisible worm that destroys the love and joy and peace of a child's Eden. In the end, Dominic is free to go, sadder and wiser. But Laura? It is hard to believe that, even with the world all before her, she has the essential humanity to give, as well as take, life.

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History seen as brief encounters

SO MUCH research has clearly gone into Michael Ignatieff's *Asya* that you imagine it must have been written on the bus between libraries. It is, the dust jacket assures us, a love story, but its heroine, aged five when the book opens, 85 as it ends, lives through what appears to be the entire history of the 20th century. She witnesses the Russian Revolution; in Paris she swings in the Twenties, listens to the distant echo of Hitler's marching footsteps in the Thirties, and learns about bombs and BBC in London during the second world war. It might come as some surprise then that *Asya* is above all a gripping yarn. It is a tale of battle and escape, torn allegiances and treachery, of

Sabine Durrant

ASYA
By Michael Ignatieff
Chatto & Windus, £13.99
DEAR MR RIGHT
By Eileen Dewhurst
Piatkus, £11.95

yearning and broken illusions. At its heart is a close group of Russian émigrés buffeted by hurricanes of change, who come together and are wrenched apart. It is a tense process. *Asya* for one, who seems to have dedicated her life to leaving places in a hurry, loses her son once, her husband twice. Partings in fact begin to dictate the rhythm of the book — a series of station platform goodbyes convey the passing of the war. But the novel, Ignatieff's first, is more at home with history and sweeps of time than he is with character. There is something too idealised about this woman, this icon of endurance and perseverance. And it is hard to get to grips with the fundamental contradiction in her personality: strength and resilience in the early part of the book — battling across the Black Sea, bringing up a child on her own — and her later

capacity to lie down and settle into the role of little wife. It is this role after all that causes all the problems in Eileen Dewhurst's *Dear Mr Right*. James Marshall, tall, dark and widowed, is tired of being the amatory focus of every unmarried woman in the seaside town in which he lives. Dinner parties, with obligatory "James will drive you home, Fiona", have become a nightmare. So Mr Marshall, eager to recapture the peace and companionship of his happy marriage, decides to advertise for a wife. So far, so comforting. Cosy environment, what with the refined setting and all those books. Easy, age-old subject — a man's search for a spouse. There are comic walk-on parts in the shape of Hilda, his uptight, lace-curtain-switching half-sister; Harry, his man-about-town neighbour; and Mrs Moxon, the statutory motherly housekeeper. The personal column device (stifle those suspicions of structural laziness on the part of the author) seems set to introduce a stream of unsuitable women

and a frothy comedy of sexual manners. But then ingenious Eve is found strangled in the dunes, and things never seem quite the same again. This is an odd book. Its sudden change of tone — from sitcom to thriller — is disconcerting. And whereas the first major plot shock is wonderfully satisfying, the second simply leaves you baffled. Much of the novel seems to be a lesson in how to read character, in the importance of disregarding romantic first impressions, of listening to the evidence and not the whispering of one's own heart. So when in the final confrontation you find the ring pulled from under your feet, it feels as though you've fallen flat on your face.

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CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

Immigration sparks a clash of customs

After his massive hit with *Rain Man*, Barry Levinson allows himself an intimate, autobiographical reflection in *Avalon* (U, Curzon Video, Screen-on-the-Hill). The wide-eyed, mischievous little Michael (Elijah Wood), watching everything and under everybody's feet, is evidently a self-portrait of the writer-director.

Michael represents the third generation of a Jewish immigrant family. The five Krichinsky brothers arrived in Baltimore before the first world war, and contributed from their slender earnings as paperhangers to bring parents, sweethearts, cousins and the rest of the clan from Europe.

The saga ranges backwards and forwards in time, but mostly takes place in the early Fifties, when the family is settled, modestly prosperous and looking back over 40 years of the immigrant experience. Michael's adored grandfather, Sam (Armin Mueller-Stahl), is the patriarch. The collage of scenes from family life is intricately and seamlessly structured. At the ritual family gatherings the same topics, the same reminiscences, the same jokes, the same recriminations are reassuringly repeated year after year. Sam and his brothers work, grow old, retire. The young ones marry, have children, adopt more pronounced names and struggle to get rich.

Times change. With greater prosperity people move out into the suburbs. Television brings new business opportunities and new social habits. Levinson has amusing and familiar memories of the thrills and frustrations of the early days of the small screen.

Avalon is a loving, nostalgic celebration of family life, but also an elegy for its loss. The old days have gone — when people were uncomfortably crowded in the city in their worker houses, falling over

David Robinson on Barry Levinson's

Avalon, Gerard Depardieu in *Green**Card*, C'est la vie and *Buddy's Song*

each other, plagued by in-laws, but together. "What happened to the family?" wails Sam, as the scattering of mourners leave his wife's funeral. Where once there were the great family feasts, the survivors now eat television meals on their knees. Sam himself will end in an old people's home.

Levinson does not see it as an exclusively Jewish loss. "I think some of these things are responsible for many of the problems we have today, because the idea of a family unit goes back thousands and thousands of years and it's really only since the late 1940s that it started to come apart."

Levinson rigorously avoids the sentimentality endemic to this kind of subject. His economical, elliptical scenes are always cut before there is time for tears. The film is more often ebullient and comic than melancholy, though with the same underlying lyrical quality as his earlier and undervalued *The Natural*. The Baltimore locations, the vintage cars and television sets and Allen Daviau's subtle, muted photography stamping out of period, first-hand sense of place.

Above all, though, this is a film of people and performances. Even the background figures, the lookers-on at the family feasts, are perfectly cast; while in the foreground are the majestic little Armin Mueller-Stahl (most recently seen in *The Music Box*) and Joan Plowright, a specialist in matriarchal monsters of all

As a waiter or playing the part of an avant-garde composer, he rules every scene

as unhygienic but intriguing, with enviable savoir-faire in cuisine, culture and love. The whole *raison d'être* of the film is Gerard Depardieu. This is not his first English-speaking part, but mercifully almost nobody remembers Marco Ferreri's 1978 disaster, *Bye Bye Monkey*. He turns his hesitations and mispronunciations into a wonderful comic tool. Whether taking the part of a gourmet waiter, cordially insulting health-conscious customers, or masquerading as an avant-garde composer at a Manhattan dinner party, he dominates every scene.

The character is evidently based on the actor himself, incorporating autobiographical confessions and even his personal tattoos. Depardieu is, in any case, now larger than life or than any character he plays. This great bulk, with his bulbous face, is a phenomenon on his own, persuading us that, against all probability, he can exert a romantic appeal upon all the women around him.

Of these, Andie MacDowell works bravely at the task of partnering this comic giant; and Weir has surrounded the couple with nice characters, notably Jessie Keosian as a diminutive and nosey neighbour. With its loving use of locations, this is a very New York picture — which makes it the more remarkable that it is a Franco-Australian co-production. There is more French character and local colour in *Diane Kurys' C'est la vie* (12, Barbican), childhood reminiscence of a holiday at La Baule les Pins in 1958. All Kurys' films have been autobiographical. In the best of them, *Coup de foudre*, she recalled the disruption in her parents' marriage when her mother fell in love with another woman. *C'est la vie* appears to record a later episode in the relationship,

with the parents going through the crisis of separation.

The grown-ups' troubles only occasionally intrude upon their two young daughters, who have more urgent preoccupations. They join their three young cousins in explorations of the little resort, the beach, the musty rented house. There are adventures with dogs, cats and other children, innocent discoveries of sex and love, an attempt at arson. The summer's big event is that the smallest cousin learns to tie his own shoelaces.

Beautifully played by children and grown-ups alike (even

Attraction of opposites: Gerard Depardieu and Andie MacDowell in *Green Card*

if Nathalie Baye smiles too much these days), this bitter-sweet reminiscence is sometimes agonisingly familiar even to people whose beaches are less sunny and family lives less fraught.

Buddy's Song (12, Odeons Marble Arch and Mezzanine, Cannons Haymarket and Oxford Street) is a meandering story of a turbulent family who should clearly never have come together in the first place. Cherry Roger Daltrey is a one-time rock singer, still wearing teddy-boy suits and living out his retarded fantasies. Sharon Duce is his wife, a sharp little body with social

ambitions and a job in computers. It is an uphill task for their clean-cut son Buddy (Chesney Hawkes) to reconcile them; though of course in the end he manages it through his music.

The dream of overnight success through video studios, pop records and videos is contemporary; but the writing and style of the film are reminiscent of British B-pictures of the Forties. They, however, had the merit of only being 80 minutes long. The film was directed by Claude Whatham and scripted, from his own novel, by Nigel Hinton.

BRIEFING

Tips for BM race

TODAY is the closing date for applications for the top museum job in the country: director of the British Museum. Applicants from within likely to challenge are Jean Rankine, the deputy director, and Ian Longworth, keeper of Romano-British antiquities. Directors Tim Clifford (National Galleries of Scotland) and Robert Anderson (National Museums of Scotland) are expected to apply. But most fancied is Alan Borg, director general of the Imperial War Museum. The BM faces a disruptive £80-million expansion programme; in Borg's favour is his experience of guiding a rebuild at the IWM.

Signed song

IF THE percussionist Evelyn Glennie was principally responsible for focusing attention on the musical responses of the deaf, a new theatrical venture carries on the pioneering work. Tomorrow, Theatre Venture — noted for its Theatre of the Deaf productions — launches its national six-week tour of *Wild Child*, John Gray's new signed opera, at the Tom Allen Centre in Stratford, east London. Ten deaf and hearing performers will participate.

Last chance...

TRUE to the role he performed in Sygne's *The Playboy of the Western World* at Leeds, Reece Dinsdale's Christy is flustering the hearts of young ladies in the audience. The West Yorkshire Playhouse (0532 442111) reports brisk sales of his photo, though admirers of this Playboy of the West Riding stop short of offering him new laid eggs, like the girls in the play. Jude Kelly's vivid production ends on Saturday.

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The woman at the door looked puzzled. "Is something wrong?" Are the earphones no good? she asked as I returned the set she had given me only five minutes before. "The earphones are fine," I replied. "The film is no good." "Ah," she said with the tired voice of experience, "that is another problem." Perhaps it was inevitable: when a festival presents 25 films in competition, the law of averages does not work in the optimist's favour.

But, this being Berlin, there was always another port of call if the viewer was forced to beat a retreat. A salute to Robert Mitchum and Jane Russell rubbed sprocket-holes with a survey of Romanian documentaries from 1898 to the present; though what price *The Romanian People Celebrate the 70th Birthday of Stalin* when films such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* were around? The International Forum of Young Cinema offered hardy souls a daunting line-up from cinema's advanced guard, topped off with a rare screening of the 12-hour version of Jacques Rivette's 1970 *Out One*.

There was also, inescapably, Berlin itself. Once the earphones were handed in, only a strong person could resist the lure of the Brandenburg Gate, free of wall and guards, its approaches populated by hawkers of trinkets from the former communist regime.

Missing teeth score over lost roots

At the Berlin Film Festival, Geoff Brown is bemused by the jury decisions but impressed by the strong ethnic images

misses, "one of the most beautiful villages back home." But tragedy lies in wait; and the director, Bruce Beresford, steers the story through its varying moods with hardly a wrong step. Pierce Brosnan, usually condemned to inferior films, heads the moustachioed colonial band; but the film belongs totally to Ezhiashi — mastery as the ebullient clerk trapped between two worlds.

Some thought Vanessa Redgrave would snatch the Best Actress prize for her extraordinary performance in *The Ballad of the Sad Café*. But Simon Callow's brave film (reviewed by David Robinson on Monday) was passed by completely; and the actress prize went instead to Victoria Abril for her sinuous performance in *Vincente* Aranda's *Lovers* as a widow who seduces a young lad into passion and murder.

The award for Best Director was shared between Ricky Tognazzi for his film about Italian football hooligans, *Ultra*, and Jonathan Demme, for his slick but queasy thriller *The Silence of the Lambs*. The

film certainly deserved recognition for something, if only its ability to hold an audience in a vice. But many in the audience must have been wringing with pain at the story's sheer nastiness.

The film stars Jodie Foster as a graduate student of the FBI sent to interview a psychotic ex-psychiatrist with cannibalistic tendencies. The errand, of course, thrusts plucky Jodie into hideous perils, delineated in gloating

detail. She must also act opposite that arch scene-stealer Anthony Hopkins, as the monster who both exerts and repels her. She survives, barely, so does the audience.

Outside the main prizes, the jury scattered special prizes and mentions like confetti. Marco Bellocchio's *The Conviction*, a foolish and ponderous exploration of a rape trial, and a Russian entry, Viktor Aristov's *Satan*, shared a special prize. Kevin Costner

only received a mention for his epic endeavours on *Dances with Wolves*; maybe the jury thought the film's 11 Oscar nominations were enough.

Another special mention was given to Iran's entry, Masud Kimia's *Snake Fang* — a worthy, neo-realist drama set in a chaotic Tehran picking up the pieces of the eight year Iran-Iraq war. A far better sample of Iranian cinema lurked in the festival's market section: *Water, Wind, Dust*, by Amir Naderi, who enjoys the visionary gift of making simple images speak volumes. Domestic debris scattered over cracked earth;

an abandoned baby; a lone well and bucket in a vista of sand; such shots crystallise the plight of his boy hero, battling drought across a desolate landscape to locate his missing parents.

Denmark made many friends with *The Birthday Trip*, a delightful first feature from a woman director, Lone Scherfig. The birthday boy is a lumbering, genial bear of a man, a bachelor just turning 40; his trip takes him to Poland in the company of four friends seeking cheap booze and female companionship. Scherfig charts their roistering progress with a kindly eye for human follies. Not all the films kept festival director Moritz de Hadeln's promise of "cinema in the humanist tradition", but this one did.

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THEATRE

Silly Cow Haymarket

THERE was vague menace in the air at the Haymarket on Tuesday. Ben Elton seemed to be delivering a warning to those of us who did not greatly admire *Gaspin*, the play he recently concocted for the same address. At any rate, this second comedy concerns a vicious hack who destroys a promising theatrical career with a killer-reviewer, and is duly rewarded with a series of shocking humiliations. The message is clear. Woe betide any critic who wishes Elton would at last move his Punch-and-Judy stall out of London's most handsome playhouse.

Well, I must accept his black spot bravely. The questions about Elton's dramatic gifts raised by *Gaspin* are not answered by *Silly Cow*. There is still more energetic babbled than effective event. Plot still seems secondary to comic one-liners which, to be frank, would not always pass muster at a sixth-form booze-up the night before term ends.

Enter Dawn French, a cross between a trumpeting, lumbering elephant and a sofa swathed in improbable purples. She plays a journalist who sees her victims rather as a BSE might see Iraq. There has, for instance, been a recent piece about "poor fatty

Fergie looking like an explosion in a pizza parlour". This sort of gleeful destructiveness explains her courting by Patrick Barlow's smarmy Sidney, who plans to launch a "Eurotableid" with her as its "resident bitch".

Doris Wallis, as she is bathetically called, is successively seen with him, with her demure secretary (Victoria Carting), with her earnest accountant (Alan Haywood), and with her toyboy (Kevin Allen, all adenoids and tinpot swagger). Gradually it becomes clear that, like the plan to privatise air in *Gaspin*, she is meant to epitomise the greedy 1990s. "When the dogs are eating the dogs, make sure you are the biggest bitch at the table," she announces by way of expounding her philosophy. So far, so good, if also so predictable.

But the feeling grows that Elton is having things both ways, thank you. Doris is a sadist and a cheat. She and the equally nasty Sidney also crack all the jokes. Enjoyable drama, even major drama, has admittedly sometimes come from playwrights who slyly enjoyed the monsters they ostensibly condemned. But they have not often tried to sustain an act with lines like "I've got my tongue so far up your backside I know how many fillings you've got" or asked an audience to laugh at "I wanna get so full of f--- that if I don't cross my legs I'll fly out of the window". The plot sometimes seems the merest excuse for insular, knowing



Accountant and sadist: Alan Haywood and Dawn French

cracks about Channel 4, Michael Fish, Wogan and *Blankety Blank*, but a plot does still tardily emerge. It involves an actress suing Doris for unforgivable libels. This encounter provides the evening with an amusing if implausible denouement, but I feel able to reveal nothing more about it than that it

makes effective fun of the thespian pretensions. Ben Elton, the play's director as well as its author, has apparently asked us reviewers to say nothing about what is, ironically, his one good scene. And here I shall not cross him.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

OPERA

Lodoiska La Scala, Milan

CHERUBINI'S *Lodoiska* was such a success at its premiere in Paris 200 years ago that it ran for 200 consecutive performances. The novelties it offered were the promotion of the orchestra from commentator to protagonist, and the predominance of dramatically evolving ensembles over solo numbers. La Scala's new production is also a success but runs for only seven performances, although it can be heard at this summer's Ravenna Festival.

Composed six years before *Medea*, *Lodoiska* is rather naive *comédie héroïque* (with spoken dialogue) for which La Scala's cast



Mariella Devia: elicited a performance of extraordinary fluency

makes a strong case. Mariella Devia, imprisoned in a cruel tyrant's castle, expresses her heroic suffering with adamantine precision; her lust-crazed tormentor (heavily into bondage) is delineated with dark menace and incisive attack by William Shimell. Thomas Moser sings powerfully as her liberator and Bernard Lombardo idiomatically, if a bit thinly, as her lover, Alessandro Corbelli is a classic comic servant and Mario Lupieri — a true *basso profondo* — a sinister one.

But Cherubini gives the most distinctive voice to the orchestra, which continues its ceaseless narrative at moments when the singers are assigned bland declamation. The orchestral language is essentially that of the late Haydn symphonies turned to dramatic vigour, and after a rather uninspired first half-hour the tension it generates rarely slackens. Riccardo Muti conducts a performance of extraordinary fluency by the Scala Orchestra whose lean, muscular playing always achieves its expressive effects by inflection rather than inflation.

Margherita Falleri's sets play head-spinning tricks of perspective which show aspects of the massive castle from the viewpoint of the participants; the producer Luca Ronconi — an infamous director of operas — on this occasion contents himself with telling the story.

NIGEL JAMIESON

ROCK

Jesus Jones Town and Country

EARLIER this month Jesus Jones's second album, *Doubt*, entered the chart at No. 1, a convincing show of strength by a band that has welded an alarmingly disparate array of ingredients into a coherent, if frantic, musical formula. Returning to their home turf at the end of a lengthy British tour, the five musicians gave no hostages to fortune in a show that was characterised by a peculiar brand of meticulous anarchy.

Overlooked by three huge luridly grinning pumpkin faces, they took the stage wheeling and charging like pirates overunning the deck of a merchant clipper in high seas. Bassist AJ Jaworski was quickly stripped to the waist, his long hair swirling about his face in classic deadpanning tradition. Barry D wrestled with his electronic keyboard, pushing and booting it around its podium and occasionally lifting the whole unit above his head. Patrolling stage centre was the willowy figure of singer-guitarist Stephen Mike Edwards, a man well-wrapped in the art of the dramatic gesture, yet cool enough to maintain a measure of elegant detachment from the mayhem going on around him.

What might have sounded like an undifferentiated tidal wave of noise, loaded with hyperactive

squawks of treble and a kind of cement-mixer effect clanking around in the mid-range, was in fact a sophisticated combination of psychedelic drones, rap-culture funk-dance rhythms, neat hard-core vocals and high-tech, acid-house gismology, all pieced together like a highly complex jigsaw.

Their uncanny ability to forge alliances between so many of rock's tribes is the key to the Joneses' success. When it comes to mixing their singles, they are even shrewd enough to hire Phil Harding and Ian Currow from Stock Aitken Waterman's label PWL, to give the finished product a suitable pop gloss. But in case there was any mistaking the band's intentions, Edwards dedicated "Two and Two" to anyone who might be fool enough to suggest that Jesus Jones is just a pop group. The point was well made as the song's pulverising beat led inexorably towards a climax of carefully controlled cacophony.

There was no doubting the commercial appeal and thoughtful content of "Real Real Real", "International Bright Young Thing" and the current hit "Who? Where? Why?". Any nagging doubts that the performance was a little too contrived, or critical caveats concerning the lack of space in the uniformly hectic song arrangements, were swept aside by the euphoric rush of the encores, "Trust Me" and "Info Freako".

DAVID SINCLAIR

ROCK

A-ha Hammersmith Odeon

DOES it damn A-ha with the faintest of praise to nominate them as Norway's finest rock outfit? Norwegian or not, the band belong to that sector of the music scene which always locates an undiscovered market. Putting themselves in the hands of the right art directors and producers (Alan Stanley, who slaved over Tears for Fears' lavish last album, produced half of A-ha's new LP *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*), they make a good fist of it

on video and vinyl, but the paucity of their product is harshly exposed in live performance.

This was evident despite a routinely impressive set design — apparently dreamed up by an arrachophile with access to a giant Meccano set. Rugged up to provide a dazzling light-show, the construction crouched menacingly over what was also, in another sense, a light show.

A-ha could be pigeonholed as the Nordic branch of the school of soft-centred, sparsely, clean-cut rock. Like Deacon Blue and INXS, they sing loathsome songs about nothing of any particular significance and, like the singers of those other two bands, Morten Harket has a pretty voice (if

tending to flatness) and the requisite pretty cheekbones.

It seems not to matter that on stage he has the charisma of a cabbage patch — not to his fans, anyway. When they were asked, "Do you still remember us out there?" (A-ha having been out of circulation for the last two years of their five-year life), the high pitch of the squealed affirmative suggested that most fans are at that age when they do not yet have long memories, or critical faculties.

The one thing about which they did not need reminding was that Harket looks the part in leather jacket and sleeveless T-shirt of mandatory idealism. Unfortunately A-ha do not really sound the part. The compositions do not allow

Harket's voice to be flamboyant, while Magne Furuhelmen lorded it over his keyboard with much the same lack of aplomb as Pål Waaktaar addressed his fretboard.

Apart from a cheerless cover of the Everly Brothers' "Crying in the Rain", A-ha and their three-man back-up drilled through their own material. The early hits "Take On Me" and "The Sun Always Shines on TV" provided the singalong fodder, while "Sycamore Leaves" from the latest album and "Hunting High and Low" from the first hinted that they have it in them to compose imaginatively. The rest of the evidence suggested otherwise.

JASPER REES

NEW RELEASES

THE FIELD (12) Richard Harris in Thelma Houston's song and (where indicated) with the symbol (S) on release across the country.

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CINEMA GUIDE

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THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of current theatre in London

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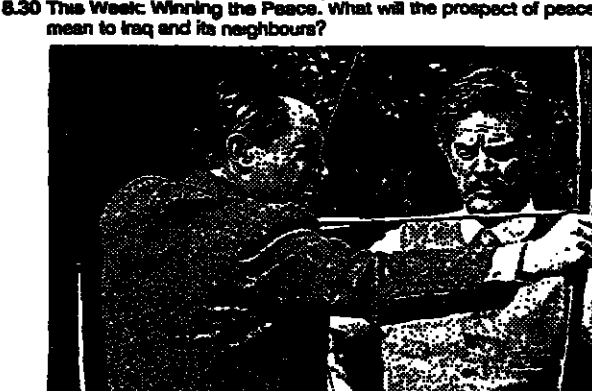
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CHAPTER 4

- 6.00 The Channel Four Daily
- 9.25 Schools
- 12.00 News summary
- 12.05 The Parliament Programme presented by Sue Cameron
- 12.30 Business Daily Financial and business news service
- 1.00 Sesame Street: Educational fun for pre-school children
- 2.00 The Ancient Art of Cookery: Roy Strong and cookery expert Sara Paston-Williams visit the Stuart kitchens of Riddlesden Hall in their exploration of cuisine of the past (T) (Teletext)
- 2.30 Cutting Edge: No Asylum. A repeat of Monday's programme about former psychiatric patients, now having to fend for themselves (Teletext)
- 3.30 Land Of Hope Episode eight of the Australian series chronicling two centuries of Australian history through the lives of one Irish-Australian working-class family (I)
- 4.30 Countdown
- 5.00 The Adventures Of TinTin Episode 13 of *The Treasure of Rackham the Red* (T)
- 5.05 The Oprah Winfrey Show. Oprah introduces the finalists of her nationwide search for the perfect model
- 6.00 Kate & Allie. American comedy about two single mothers who share a Greenwich Village flat. With Jane Curran and Susan Saint James (I)
- 6.30 Desmond's. More cutting humour set in a black barber's shop in southeast London (I) (Teletext)
- 7.00 Channel 4 News with Jan Snow and Zeinab Badawi (Teletext)
- 7.30 Corrieann followed by Weather
- 8.00 Science and the People. How do people live where they do? What do changing patterns of settlement mean for the future of our planet? The second programme in the series uses the resources of modern geographical techniques to answer these and other questions
- 8.30 The Orchard House
- © CHOICE It is the turn of Stella (Kate Buffery) to take centre stage this week, returning to her troubled family in the Caribbean after an unsuccessful marriage in the United States. She finds her father (Nigel Terry) still hooked on opium and cousin Andrew dying



Promoting honesty as the best policy: Ray Wyre (10.30pm)


10.30 True Stories: Gracewell.
 ● **CHOICE:** Founded in 1988 by a probation officer Ray Wyre, Gracewell is the only residential clinic in Europe devoted to the treatment of men who sexually abuse children. Wyre has no illusions about his task. Many of his clients were themselves abused but he refuses to find excuses for them. And he prefers to talk about control rather than cure. His main aim is to get the men to be honest with themselves and face up to the realities of their behaviour. Robert Fleming's documentary is disarmingly straight to the point. Instead of appearing with their faces or voices disguised, four habitual offenders stand four square before the cameras and tell all. They are shown at communal therapy sessions being forced to relive their crimes and submit themselves to critical questioning by fellow offenders. So far not one Gracewell "client" has been reconvicted, but Wyre admits it is early days.

11.50 A Week In Politics. Former prime minister Lord Callaghan is interviewed about the Gulf war, and there is a profile of the Swindon parliamentary constituency that Labour must win in order to stand a chance of forming a majority government. Includes **Channel 4 News - Midnight Special** Ends at 2.00am

35 The Movie Show
 11:00 PM-11:35 PM: The movie stars of a

...the sports channel

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Major sees June as best time for a general election

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND ROBIN OAKLEY

THE prime minister is keen to seek a fresh mandate in a June general election, close associates have disclosed.

Recent suggestions that John Major strongly favours an election next year and is opposed to an early poll are wide of the mark.

Authoritative sources say that his own preference is for June, providing the Conservatives stay ahead in the polls and he believes they can win.

The disclosure of Mr Major's personal preference would have to be considered. Some felt that the momentum might become irresistible. However, Conservative whips report that a majority of MPs still

per cent off interest rates, and the prospect grew of an early and comprehensive victory in the Gulf war.

The cut prompted much election talk among Conservative MPs, largely because it was followed by cuts in mortgage rates, which they see as the key component in the revival of economic optimism.

Tory MPs who had been sceptical of early election options were saying that a May or June contest would now have to be considered. Some felt that the momentum might become irresistible. However, Conservative whips report that a majority of MPs still

favour waiting until next year.

Labour stepped up planning for an early election yesterday when its national executive agreed to draw up a new campaigning document, which would form the basis of the manifesto, by mid-April.

Mr Major's close colleagues expect him, like Margaret Thatcher at the last two general elections, to assess the Tory performance in the May local elections before making a decision about a June poll.

However, close associates say that he is keen to have "his own show". If the indicators in early May suggest that a June election victory is likely, Mr Major will not be deterred by the fact he has been party leader for only seven months. He is enthusiastic to get the authority of a general election victory behind him before moving to the next phase in the Conservative programme.

Factors cited by Mr Major's close associates in favour of a June election are the sharp fall in inflation that will have taken place by then, which will almost certainly mean further interest rate cuts, the continuing logjam over the replacement for the poll tax, and the need to have an election out of the way before potentially divisive votes early next year on the outcome of the European inter-governmental conference on economic and monetary union.

Sources now accept that whatever the final outcome of the poll tax review, legislation is unlikely to be ready for the next session of Parliament. Prolonging the Parliament beyond this session would therefore mean that there was little to put in the last legislative programme. An election victory, Mr Major's close colleagues say, would end sniping from the right that he is retreating from Thatcherism.

Mr Major's colleagues accept that Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, continues to favour an election next year when the economic benefits of the inflation fall will be more apparent. The Treasury is said to be predicting an inflation rate at the end of the year as low as 4 per cent, offering scope for continued reductions in interest rates later this year continuing into 1992. The option for June this year is believed to be favoured, by Chris Patten, the party chairman, and John MacGregor, Commons leader.

Building societies cut mortgage rate

By ANATOLE KALITSKY, ECONOMICS EDITOR

HOPES of a further cut in interest rates spread through the City yesterday after the government sanctioned the cut in bank base rates.

The easing of monetary policy was rapidly followed by announcements from the main building societies that mortgage rates would be lowered from April 1. Most said that they would lower their basic rates by 0.75 per cent to 13.75 per cent, but several suggested more generous reductions if the Chancellor made a further cut in money market rates around the time of the Budget on March 19.

There was immediate speculation in the City about the timing and size of the next rate cut with most analysts predicting another half-point off at the time of the Budget, but a sizeable minority arguing that a full point might be possible by the end of March. A cut to 12 per cent might persuade some of the big building societies to offer exceptional reductions in mortgage payments to more than two million customers whose interest rates are adjusted annually and would not normally be reviewed until next year.

Analysts also said that sterling was almost certainly strong enough in the European exchange-rate mechanism to allow a further half-point cut in rates in the Budget or even before. They were divided, however, on how the market

might react to a more aggressive monetary easing.

Estate agents took the interest rate cut as an optimistic sign for the housing market but said that further cuts were needed. Peter Miller, spokesman for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, said: "This is excellent news for homebuyers and must herald the beginning of the downturn in mortgage payments."

Hugh Dunsmore-Hardy, president of the National Association of Estate Agents, said: "We're still looking for further cuts either before or in the Chancellor's March budget, but at last we are moving in the right direction and homeowners have reason to be optimistic."

Many home owners and motorists will soon face heavy increases in their insurance premiums. Commercial Union and General Accident plan a series of rate rises to counter a big increase in claims last year.

General Accident said that it might increase its motor rates four times this year, including last month's 6 per cent rise, and was reviewing home and contents rates. Commercial Union said that it needed further rises on home and contents policies and that premiums could increase by more than a quarter later this year.

Cheaper home loans, page 23
Temps, page 25



Shared grief: Jane Corner with her 16-month-old son, Adam, attending the funeral of her husband David yesterday, who was killed by the IRA bomb at Victoria rail station. More than 200 mourners attended the service at St Paul's church in Thornton Heath, south London, where Mr Corner was a volunteer warden.

Schwarzkopf's battle plan

Continued from page 1

thrusts into the desert of southern Iraq and sent highly trained special forces commandos to act as eyes and ears deep in Iraq. The amphibious assault was never launched but it tied up Iraqi divisions along the coast.

Commenting on the special forces, a rare event for a military commander, General Schwarzkopf said they had gathered intelligence, helped to rescue downed allied airmen and undertook unspecified "direct action".

He appeared to be bitter when he spoke of retreating Iraqis taking 40,000 Kuwaitis with them. He said that was bad enough but it was nothing compared with unspeakable

atrocities that had been carried out in Kuwait by Iraqi soldiers. "The people who did that, they are not part of the same human race," he said.

In the air and land campaign so far allied forces had destroyed or captured 3,008 enemy tanks, 2,370 armoured personnel carriers and 2,140 artillery pieces. He said there had been "a very large number" of Iraqi dead discovered in the trenches across Kuwait. In some locations desertions had been running at up to 30 per cent. The number of prisoners of war had risen to 50,000 but the figure was changing every day.

General Schwarzkopf praised all the allied units. He said the British 1st Armoured Di-

vision had done "a great job" and was still fighting. He had particular praise for the US marines who drove into southern Kuwait in the first hours of the ground war.

He also singled out the US 24th Mechanised Infantry Division and the French which had carried out a wide flanking manoeuvre to the west of Kuwait. He said he had intended to delay the advance to Kuwait City for a day but changed his mind when told of atrocities there.

"The war is not over," he said. "People are still dying out there." General Schwarzkopf said pilots had "a very successful day" on Tuesday in destroying Scud missile launchers in western Iraq.

Political sketch

Bores run wild on animal farm

YESTERDAY, Phillip Oppenheim (C, Amber Valley) asked the House for leave to bring in the Zoo Animal Welfare Bill. This, he stressed, had nothing to do with work conditions at Westminster. Perhaps he was anticipating the barbs of sketchwriters? He anticipated wrong. It's not the conditions at Westminster which remind us of zoos. It's the inmates.

For what is the House of Commons but a place of safety for the rare, the strange and the moth-eaten humdrum?

Take environment questions, which yesterday preceded Mr Oppenheim's bill. At the dispatch box was the secretary of state. Mr Heseltine paced testily about, flicking back his blonde mane with frustration. It was years since he had sunk his teeth into the red meat of power. To compound his vexation they had thrown him a hunk of poisoned carcass called "the structure and financing of local government". How cruel to confine these kings of the jungle! Sightseers peered through the bars at him from the public gallery, pitying. Children giggled.

Another cage had caught the kids' eye. Tony Banks (Lab, Newham NW) swung round his fence, performing some of his favourite tricks. A few of them are rather rude, but yesterday we were entertained to no more than a verbal somersault (disguised as a "point of order") and a routine chatter and screech and tweaking of Mr Speaker's wig. He gets his laughs of course, but this intelligent primate is looking irritable lately. Bored with grooming themselves, they can turn nasty, I hear.

Rootling along the back benches, one of Labour's wildest boxes, Ron Brown (Leith) got his tusks hopelessly snagged in the barbed wire of his own question: "When the squaddies come home" he snorted - and then

blundered into a tangled argument about "the real enemy" - "Tories". We left him distracted by a Mrs Gorman (C, Billericay). Confined to captivity, these colourful birds become hyperactive and keep shrieking the same simple phrases, over and over again.

The minister had said "landlady" - one of the Gorman's favourite words - and she had become over-excited. It is unkind to clip the wings of this bird. Hatched to soar, she throws herself with abandon from side to side of her gilded aviary.

Just the twitch of a mangy whisker away, Sir Nicholas Fairbairn (C, Perth and Kinross) watched the birds from the corner of his eye. There were catcalls as he rose. The old coat is thinning, now, and tufts are missing - relics, perhaps, of alley-fights with rivals long seen-off but there is still - how shall we say? - an air to this creature: a lone beast that walks in the night.

But enough. Oppenheim's case was serious. "More thought," he said, "should be given to zoos as places of entertainment and education." He questioned the value "of keeping these animals cooped up in stressful conditions". Indeed! Many (we reflected) react by mindless fighting among themselves or picking on weaker ones; others become morose; or eat compulsively, growing obese.

Perhaps, Oppenheim asked, zoos could be "centres for the conservation of endangered species"? Compassionately he concluded that inmates are "sentient beings, capable of unhappiness".

From Tam Dalyell, a creature with a very sore head, and badly bailed, came a dissenting growl. From all the others came the murmur - "hear, hear" - of sentient beings, capable of unhappiness.

MATTHEW PARRIS

Briton stayed behind

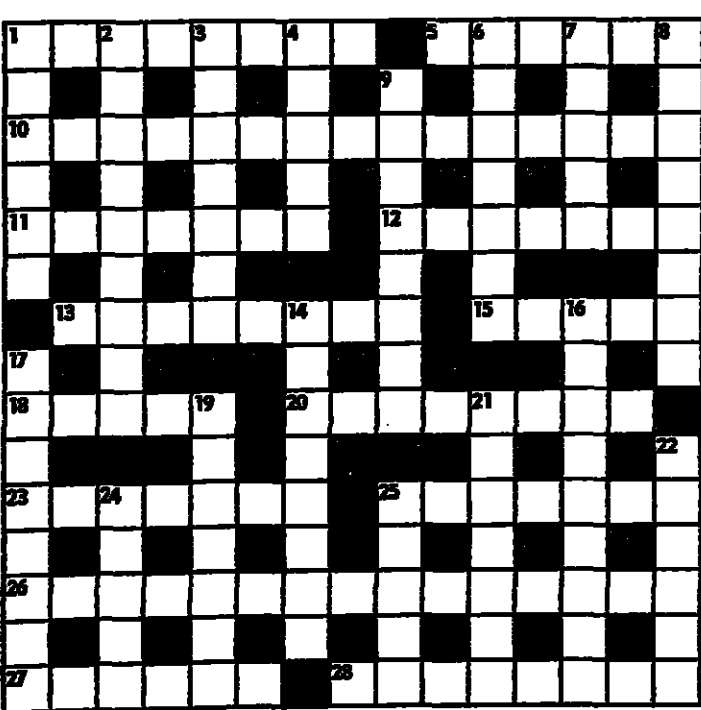
Continued from page 1
on in Kuwait. "I shall pick up the pieces if I can. This country has suffered heavily, but we will get life back to normal. Kuwait is bloodied, but unbowed."

After six months in hiding, the people of this tiny desert sheikhdom could hardly believe their ordeal was over. In ones and twos, then in dozens, then in hundreds, they emerged from their homes to wave. Tank crews stopped to embrace the crowds. All were in tears. Children waved their arms in joy, then covered their ears in fright as soldiers fired celebratory bursts of gunfire into the air.

Everything was decked out in the Kuwaiti colours of green, white, red and black. Horns sounded, lights flashed. All around them were the signs of head-long retreat.

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THE TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO 18,541



WORD-WATCHING

A daily safari through the language jungle. Which of the possible definitions is correct?
By Philip Howard

KEELING

- The codfish
- A greasy dishwasher
- Ritual wailing

DIPLOE

- A head sponge
- A two-circuit race
- Ravelling with two sculls

TACAMAEAC

- An Amerindian race
- The storm god
- Gum-resin from tropical trees

HARUSPEX

- A breccator
- Maculate, spotted
- An early leopards

Answers on page 20

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0836 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks

C. London (within N & S Cires) 731
M-ways/roads M4-M11 732
M-ways/roads M1-Dartford 733
M-ways/roads Dartford-T-M23 734
M-ways/roads T-M23 735
M25 London Orbital only 736

National traffic and roadworks

National motorways 737
West Country 738
Wales 739
Midlands 740
East Angles 741
North-west England 742
North-east England 743
Scotland 744
Northern Ireland 745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 33p per minute (cheap rate) and 44p per minute at all other times

The solution to the Eliminator Puzzle No 18,535 will appear tomorrow

ACROSS

- Not one of Landseer's paintings? (8)
- Sponge a 28 returned to end of bath (6)
- Plant bananas or nuts (4-2-3-6)
- Chair boy removed from lady in the garden (7)
- Feeling of regret is concerning detective (7)
- Major pie-maker in US city (3,5)
- Half-heartedly interfere with count, perhaps (5)
- Not altogether proper actors in this? (5)
- Order for harps - that's a large number (8)
- Relax with a French couple (7)
- Smart boy turns to another in China (7)

Solution to Puzzle No 18,540

1. MARQUESS ADVEN
2. SPONGE
3. NUTS
4. BANANAS
5. GARDEN
6. PASTRY
7. DETECTIVE
8. HARP
9. ACTORS
10. ORDER
11. RELAX
12. SMART
13. CHINA

DOWN

- Deputy, on catching ringleader, produces corrupt witness (6)
- Grotesque mark in rock formation (9)
- Mixture of animals get on together, followed by men with guns (7)
- Ruth's without husband, in brief (5)
- Provide too big a garrison on island (7)
- Musician's a Scottish type (5)
- Coward's acts producing complaint (3,5)
- Repeatedly try to express approval (4,4)
- Non-stop walker (6-2)
- It's reckless to curse the church (9)
- State's capital regally financed explorer (8)
- Flapping, like wings over the sea (7)
- Talkative flier departed, reportedly giving figure in plane (7)
- Quick-tempered in style (6)
- Disintegrated on the rocks (5)
- Copper leads a lot of disorder - that's the unusual thing (5)

Concise Crossword, page 15

Central and western parts will be mostly bright after any overnight mist and fog patches clear. Scattered showers are likely and these will, perhaps, be heavy over Northern Ireland and western and northern Scotland. Eastern areas of England will be cloudy and misty with patchy rain at first, gradually brightening, but it may stay dull near eastern coasts. Outlook: changeable with bright periods and scattered showers.

WEATHER

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● LAW 30
● SPORT 31-34

BUSINESS

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 28 1991

Business Editor
John Bell

Delors attacks Bonn

GERMANY has been accused of reneging on its promises and dragging its feet on progress towards European monetary union by M. Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission.

M. Delors's spokesman said yesterday that suggestions from Bonn this week "did not fit" with the commitments made by 11 of the 12 member states when they agreed monetary union principles in Rome last October.

He is anxious about the open-ended state of the inter-governmental talks on monetary union and their eventual success, which would be threatened by German hesitation.

The specific betrayal alleged by M. Delors concerns the timetable for the establishment of a European central bank. The new German proposals merely suggest that the council of central bankers be rechristened and that the central bank itself be delayed for at least three years.

Comment, page 25

NAPF divided on recovery

Opinion about the prospects for recovery in the small company sector is divided at the annual investment conference of the National Association of Pension Funds in Eastbourne.

Last year, returns from smaller companies fell more sharply than the overall market, which saw its first fall in absolute terms since 1974. But that disappointment and deepening recession has not destroyed all the optimism.

NAPF attack, page 26

Cityvision buys

Cityvision, the video rental group, has bought 46 hire stores from the Video Store Group (inc. reeling) for £2.4 million, bringing its total assets to 354 stores nationwide. Cityvision reported a tax profit of £16.4 million (£12.5 million) on a £78.4 million (£45.8 million) turnover. A 0.5p final dividend makes 1p (0.75p) for the year.

Tempus, page 25

THE POUND

US dollar 1.9160 (-0.0035)
German mark 2.9179 (-0.0036)
Exchange index 93.8 (-0.1)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1877.8 (+22.8)
FT-SE 100 2348.0 (+25.8)
New York Dow Jones 2889.80 (+25.00)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 26094.25 (-188.71)
Closing Prices ... Page 29

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:
British Aerospace 81½p (+37p)
Lloyds 349½p (+10p)
Nippon 307½p (+17p)
Grand Met 72½p (+14p)
Scott & Newcastle 338½p (+13p)
Stagline 180½p (+10p)
Berkley Group 256½p (+15p)
Caledonian Robby 50p (+15p)
RM Douglas 45p (+32p)
Redland 64½p (+13p)
Taylor Woodrow 222½p (+17p)
WH Smith A 352½p (+13p)
Security Services 363p (+13p)
Sobe 391½p (+10p)
Campani 245p (+15p)
Trafalgar House 248p (+13p)

FALLS

Steeley 397p (-6p)
Leigh 328p (-7p)
Glavo 918p (-11p)
Central TV 483½p (-11p)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base 13%
3-month interbank 12½-13%
3-month eligible bills 12½-13%
US Prime Rate 9%
Federal Funds 6½%
3-month Treasury Bill 6.04-6.05%
30-year bonds 96½-97

CURRENCIES

London New York
£: \$1.9160
DM: £1.9155
Sfr: £1.2155
FF: £1.2155
Yen: £1.2155
Index: £1.3
ECU: £1.7022
SDR: £1.7352
ECU: £1.42216
SDR: £1.55836

GOLD

London Fixing:
AM \$350.00 pm \$350.00
close \$350.00 \$350.00 (\$187.70-188.10)
New York:
Comex \$351.05-361.55

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Mar) \$18.30 bbl (\$17.95)
Dudley (Sept) trading price

Cheaper home loans to follow half-point cut

By ANATOLE KALETSKY AND SARA MCCONNELL

THE City began immediate speculation about a further interest rate cut in next month's Budget after foreign exchange markets reacted calmly to the half-point cut in rates signalled by the Bank of England yesterday.

Millions of homeowners will feel the benefit of the rate cut as lenders began to announce lower mortgage rates for new and existing borrowers. But there is no rate cut for mortgages reviewed annually.

The Bank's signal to the money market was followed by cuts in the clearing banks' base rates to 13 from 13½ per cent and lower mortgages from the main building societies. Share prices rose in response to the cut in base rates, with the FT-SE 100 index up by 25.8 points to 2,348.0.

Many industrialists and politicians remained dissatisfied with the modest scale of the monetary easing, attacking the government for doing "too little too late" to end the recession. But in City dealing rooms, the Bank's move was seen as astutely timed and deftly handled. As the pound quickly stabilised in the foreign exchange market after a brief dip of less than one penny against the mark, analysts' attention rapidly shifted to the timing of the next base rate cut and the possibility of an early election.

Money market rates, which had discounted yesterday's cut for almost two weeks, also sharply again by the afternoon, implying another reduction was already priced into

	New Rate (%)	Old Rate (%)	New monthly payment (£)	Old monthly payment (£)
Endowment				
£250,000	13.75	14.50	257.83	271.88
£500,000	13.75	14.50	487.00	513.55
£750,000	13.05	13.80	830.75	876.05
£1,000,000	12.95	13.70	1,059.91	1,117.71
Repayment				
£250,000	13.75	14.50	292.07	294.15
£500,000	13.75	14.50	570.82	584.73
£750,000	13.05	13.80	888.86	908.94
£1,000,000	12.95	13.70	1,107.56	1,160.08

Source: Halifax Building Society

the market. The key three-month interbank rate fell by ½ to 12¾ per cent. This level would be consistent with another half-point cut at Budget time on March 19.

In the futures market, where speculators have been consistently more optimistic about the prospects for rate cuts, the short sterling contract rose to a level implying a Budget rate cut of a full percentage point.

Some analysts who thought a spring election might be imminent, argued that the Chancellor might opt for a full point cut to 12 per cent in the Budget, in order to silence both the Labour Party and the government's industrial critics, who yesterday repeated their long-standing demands for a 12 per cent rate.

A full point cut in the Budget or soon after would have a further tactical advantage because it would give the government plenty of time to assure stability on the foreign exchange markets before taking a final decision about an election in May or June.

Despite support from currency traders, however, which closed in London at DM2.9135, is still well below its midpoint of DM2.95 in the

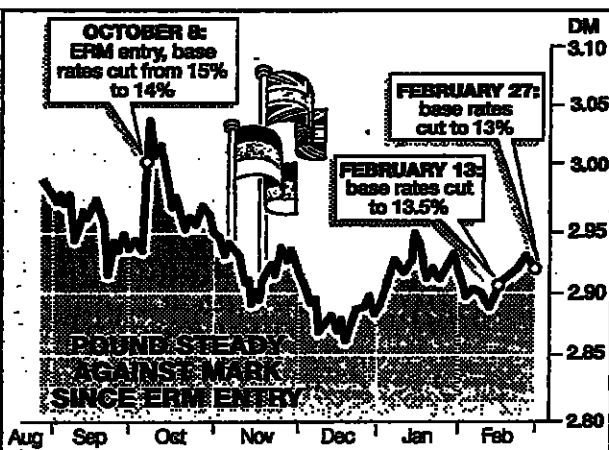
ERM, and is the second weakest currency in the system after the French franc.

The Halifax, the largest building society, promised its half a million borrowers on variable rate mortgages a cut of at least three-quarters of a point.

Jim Birrell, the Halifax chief executive, said: "This vindicated the position we took a week ago when we reduced the base mortgage rate for new borrowers to 13.75 per cent. We want to wait until the Budget before we finally confirm the rate that will apply to existing borrowers from April 1 but this will be down to at least 13.75 per cent."

But a Halifax spokeswoman said there were no plans to drop the 14.5 per cent rate set for 1.3 million Halifax customers on annual review unless there was a "dramatic cut". Borrowers could change to a variable rate mortgage but the Halifax does not envisage a lot of interest in this. Other societies said they did not want to encourage borrowers to change from an annual rate to a variable rate. The Nationwide had no plans to cut the 14.5 per cent rate for annual review customers. Cheltenham & Gloucester has cut rates by 0.75 per cent but is keeping annual review customers on 14.25 per cent.

Customers of the Leeds Permanent and the Bradford & Bingley on annual review will continue paying 14.5 per cent, although both societies have announced cuts of three-quarters of a point to 13.75 per cent in their standard rate. The Bradford & Bingley admitted it did not want to encourage its 300,000 borrowers, most of whom are on annual review, to change to the new variable rate.



Industry wants another 1%

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

INDUSTRIALISTS yesterday called on Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, to cut interest rates to 12 per cent. They said the latest half-point reduction in base rates, to 13 per cent, though welcome, was insufficient for an economic recovery.

In industries such as retailing, manufacturing, house-building and vehicle distribution, the universal view was that a further half-point cut in interest rates was needed to rekindle consumer demand and stem business failures.

The urgency of a further cut was stated forcefully by Sir Clifford Chetwood, chairman of Wimpey, the construction group, who said: "Industry needs interest rates to fall to 12 per cent to stem bankruptcies, halt the rise in unemployment, and bring confidence back to house buyers. I urge the Chancellor, subject to money-market constraints, to be brave and bring rates down to this level by June."

John Bamham, director general of the Confederation of

British Industry, said further cuts will be needed to stimulate investment and recovery.

A spokesman for Tarmac, Britain's largest housebuilder, said: "We still need another 1 per cent cut before things start moving. We know there is a considerable pent-up demand from prospective house buyers because the volume of people looking around our sites is as heavy as ever."

Nigel Whitaker, a director of Kingsfisher, the Woolworths retailer, said: "It is certainly a step in the right direction, but we will need more cuts before the effects feed through to consumer demand."

Car dealers have suffered from cuts in consumer and business spending. Sales fell to 2 million in 1990 from a five-year peak of 2.3 million during 1989. The industry expects demand to fall by 300,000 vehicles this year. Neil Marshall, economic adviser to the Retail Motor Industry Federation, said: "We welcome the further cut in interest rates but

it is not enough. We don't think the picture will change until interest rates are 12 per cent or less."

Mr Marshall pointed to the need for further cuts in base rates to prevent the real cost of money rising as inflation falls. A spokesman for Lucas Industries, one of Britain's leading engineering groups, said the interest rate cut should benefit its motor parts business in Britain, which accounts for 16 per cent of sales. But he too stressed the need for interest rates to fall by another point.

Miles Middleton, British Chambers of Commerce president, approved the Chancellor's cautious cut, and Peter Morgan, director general of the Institute of Directors, was the most upbeat. He said: "This reduction, following on the previous half per cent cut, should reassure business that the bottom of the curve has been reached and passed."

Comment, page 25

Insurance rates set to increase

By NEIL BENNETT

TWO of Britain's leading insurers are preparing heavy rises in premium rates after announcing massive underwriting losses last year.

Commercial Union and General Accident said they were prepared to sacrifice market share to increase their rates on home, contents and motor policies.

Commercial Union's pre-tax profits fell from £151 million to £1.4 million in 1990 after its underwriting losses in Britain rose from £8.1 million to £145 million. In spite of the slump, the company increased its final dividend by 0.65p to 14p, making 23p for the year, up 7 per cent.

General Accident fell to a record pre-tax loss of £121 million from a £147 million profit in 1989. The group increased its final dividend by 5 per cent to 17.05p, for a full-year payout of 26.75p, up 7 per cent.

Peter Ward, CU's general manager in charge of operations in the United Kingdom, said the company was considering a further increase in household rates, despite the 10 per cent rise in January.

He said: "If the impact of that is a reduced market share, then so be it."

Nelson Robertson, GA's chief general manager, said the group would deal with its losses with further and more frequent rate rises. He said: "There is a distinct possibility there will be four increases in motor rates this year. We cannot go along with this deterioration in our profits."

Both insurers met large claims from the storms in January and February last year and suffered record subsidence claims during the dry summer.

CU said the storms had cost £40 million, while subsidence claims rose 147 per cent to £4 million.

Both companies also suffered a large rise in motor and theft claims. CU said there had also been a sharp rise in commercial fires, and it received 132 claims of more than £100,000 each, worth a total of £58 million in the year, up 142 per cent.

Tony Brend, CU's chief executive, said the company had provided for the cost of its £7.35 million stake in Levitt, the collapsed financial services company, in the figures.

He said the company was still considering taking legal action against Chase Manhattan Bank over the purchase.

Mr Brend said CU hoped to reopen its office in Kuwait soon, but he expected claims to be small since the company's policies excluded war damage.

Tempus, page 25



Provisions made: Tony Brend, of CU, which had a stake in the collapsed Levitt group

No Kuwait oil 'for nine months'

By MARTIN BARROW

OIL production in Kuwait will not start again for nine months, Sheikh Salem al-Sabah, governor of the emirate's central bank, said, adding that nearly 650 of its 900 oil wells were on fire.

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the oil producers' cartel, is expected to order an immediate resumption of pre-war output quotas to drive oil prices back to a benchmark price of \$20 when it meets on March 11.

Saudi Arabia, which increased output to 8 million barrels per day to compensate for the loss of Iraqi and Kuwaiti crude, may take the lead by returning to its quota of 5.4 million barrels, supporting higher oil prices to boost revenues needed to cover the cost of the war effort.

Oil traders in London marked the benchmark April Brent crude up 52 cents to \$17.75 a barrel while in New York, American oil futures traded 43 cents higher at \$18.80.

Petroleum products also strengthened. On the Rotterdam spot market, petrol rose \$11 to \$233 a tonne while naphtha, the chemical industry feedstock, was up \$11 at \$226 a tonne.

The further half-point cut in base rates to 13 per cent sent share prices soaring to their highest for seven months in London. The FT-SE 100 index rallied to close 25.8 higher at 2,348.0, recovering from a dull start that saw it more than 15 points lower.

Hopes of an early end to the Gulf war also boosted shares and sentiment benefited from a firm start on Wall Street, which showed an early 25 point gain in active trading.

Markets, page 26

Norman loses the key to Yale

By COLIN CAMPBELL

NORMAN Davis, a former finance director of Yale and Valor and individual holder of more Yale shares than the board, has asked the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers to stop the bid clock in the Williams Holdings-Yale and Valor takeover.

Yale shareholders have until 3pm tomorrow to say whether they agree to the Williams' bid. Acceptance of Williams' five-for-four share offer has been recommended by Yale's board, led by Michael Montague, the chairman.

Mr Davis claims, however, that there is an alternative to being taken over, and shareholders should have the chance of considering instead that Yale and Valor's board be strengthened. He circulated

fellow shareholders with his proposals, and asserts that the company adopted frustrating tactics in only sending him a shareholders' list by last Friday - in spite of his having asked for such a list 16 days earlier. As the Companies Act requires, he paid Yale and Valor £120 for the list.

Mr Davis argues that since there is only limited time to consider his alternatives the acceptance date should be deferred. The takeover panel, has, however, declined his request. It said that while its *raison d'être* was to protect all shareholders in takeover situations, and to uphold the takeover code, Mr Davis had not been able to satisfy the panel there has been, or is likely to be, a breach.

Mr Davis, meanwhile, asserts that there should be a "level playing field",

and that because of the delays in securing the list, Yale shareholders are being denied full opportunity to consider an alternative.

In the absence of panel intervention, he has been told that he could seek an injunction.

Mr Davis says there is no opportunity to question Mr Montague and other directors about the "fire sale", nor the right to vote on compensation packages for him and others. He says that the absence of such opportunity denies them their elementary democratic rights to pass judgment on their board's actions.

"I would like to reorganise the Yale and Valor board, if only to seek a better offer," Mr Davis says.

Mr Montague said: "I am so sad that Norman remains so unhappy."

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By ANATOLE KALETSKY, ECONOMICS EDITOR

The broad thrust of fiscal policy will remain unaltered in the Budget, but the slowdown in the economy will lead to a swing in government finances, from a surplus of £2 billion this year to a public

Inflation would jump 0.6 percentage point in 1992 and 2.6 percentage point in 1993.



Tempus, page 25

By PHILIP PANGALOS

Mr Michael Webber, the chairman and chief executive, said coffee makers, fans and hair driers had been the star performers. Pifco has more than £8.7 million in the bank and its investment income soared - from £296,000 to £538,000. The news lifted the shares 10p to 246p.

By Our City Staff

She said she was asked by County NatWest, an adviser to the issue, to include 54 million shares in the employment agency in her final total. Mrs Bond said because of the move she kept the applications counted by Lloyds separate from the figure claimed

Mrs Bond said she would have questioned with her superiors whether the County move could count towards the total "because it would be unusual to accept shares after the closure of the rights issue".

County rightwist, too, parent NatWest Investment Bank, 1000 Walling & County Savings


BOC finance job
Ian Clubb, formerly with British Satellite Broadcasting, Carless, Woodside Petroleum and International Thomson Group, joins The BOC Group as finance director tomorrow and will be appointed to BOC's board on March 14.

SHARES in Asko Deutsche Kaufhaus, the German retailer, fell DM16 to DM780 yesterday after Tuesday's announcement that Klaus Jacobs, the Swiss businessman, and Asko Deutsche Kaufhaus had bought a 53 per cent stake in Adia, the Swiss employment group, from Omni Holding, the Swiss investment group.

[illegible]

**BARCLAYS BANK
BASE RATE**

Barclays Bank PLC and
Barclays Bank Trust
Company Limited
announce that with effect
from 27th February 1991
their Base Rate decreased
from 13.5% to 13%.

 **BARCLAYS**

BARCLAYS BANK PLC AND BARCLAYS BANK
TRUST COMPANY LIMITED. REGISTERED OFFICE:
54 LOMBARD STREET, EC3P 3AH. REGISTERED
NUMBERS 1026167 AND 020000.

[illegible]

Fair omens for more interest cuts

No sooner are base rates cut than financial markets look forward to the next time. March 19, Budget day, is naturally a strong favourite and 12 per cent by the end of March not impossible. Having missed earlier windows of opportunity in the currency market to cut interest rates, the Chancellor is trying to exploit the subtleties of the ERM game, even if cautious half point cuts leave business dissatisfied.

Fingers must still be crossed that the foreign exchanges will allow a continuing stream of cuts, but the omens are fair. Sterling has benefited from the slight dollar recovery against the mark. Despite falling against the German currency yesterday, the pound is still marginally above the franc at the bottom of the ERM league. Any immediate strain in the system is therefore down to Spain's peseta, which has been permanently on its own at the top.

The main importance of the latest rate cut is to trigger a widespread trimming of mortgage rates and therefore speed the fall in retail price inflation.

Optimists already look for the headline figure to fall from 9 per cent almost to 6½ per cent in three months and much lower figures are within reach by the autumn.

This can unwind inflationary expectations rapidly. Skill shortages and booming historic profits were still holding up wage settlements until recently, as the embarrassing blip in the CBI figures for wage settlements indicated. Inflation is now the biggest remaining prop to wage claims so earnings growth could come down sharply.

The big unknown in projections of second half economic recovery, however, is the state of consumer confidence. Leading sectors report consumer interest far duller than in the early Eighties or mid-Seventies recessions, when companies rather than consumers faced the biggest problems.

The mortgage rate is one key variable which needs to keep

coming down and community charge cuts would also help confidence. On past performance, rising unemployment may not be as important as logic might dictate, provided the fall in inflation leads people to believe that the worst is known and over.

One surprisingly significant indicator is the stock market, which may already be exerting a strong positive influence. Share prices have risen about 14 per cent in the past six weeks, taking dividend yields down to 3 per cent at a time when short-term dividend growth may be lower than for many years.

The London market will surely find it hard to drag share prices up more than 4 per cent further in the short-term and a correction seems more likely within a week or two. Any correction should, however, be modest and temp-

orary. A headlong reversal seems unlikely unless Wall Street influences turn particularly nasty. The public may not rush for power shares with its usual recent enthusiasm for privatisation issues but smiling faces in the City should bring more enthusiasm in the high street.

Sorry Jacques

First Britain, now Germany. The roll call of those uneasy about the pace of progress to a common eurocurrency is growing. Latest discordant notes came from Germany's draft monetary treaty presented to the intergovernmental conference this week which, to close followers of the debate in Brussels, looked guaranteed to upset in some way almost every

other member of the European Monetary System.

It took less than 24 hours to ratify Jacques Delors, architect of the plan under which Europe would have an embryo central bank in 1994. Yesterday, the president of the European Commission accused Germany of reneging on its promises and dragging its feet on progress towards European monetary union.

M Delors' spokesman said that suggestions tabled this week by Bonn did not fit with the commitments made by 11 of the European Community's 12 members in Rome last October. He is anxious about the open-ended state of the intergovernmental talks on monetary union and their eventual success would certainly be threatened by any sign of German hesitation.

The specific betrayal alleged by M Delors concerns the timetable for the establishment of a European central bank and

comes down to a disagreement over a definite article. The conclusions of the October Rome summit said that at the start of the second phase in 1994, "the new community institution" will begin. The new German proposals merely suggest that the council of central bankers be rechristened at that time and that the central bank itself be delayed for at least three years. The German government says that "a" new institution would thus arrive on the scene in 1994 but M Delors sees this as a dilution of his own schedule for monetary union.

All of which is music to the ears in London, which never agreed to the Rome text and which has openly pleaded with Bonn to slow moves to a single currency. Now Germany, like Britain, is objecting to the degree of political control that the Delors plan envisages over the European central bank. The Germans want an institution that could operate as freely and independently as the Bundesbank. The pioneer of this argument remember, was one Margaret Thatcher.

Working to keep lights on at Philips



Jan Timmer: taking stock as president of Philips

WHEN, in 1920, the owners of Philips, then a humble Dutch light bulb maker, formed a holding structure "to protect the company against the risk of a takeover", it was either a case of ingenious foresight or the planting of seeds for ultimate destruction. This Philips proudly proclaimed in a recent group profile.

If there was ever an entirely bid-proof company, it must be Philips. Of a total of 277 million Philips shares in issue, only ten carry voting rights. These are owned by the wealthy Philips family and friends. The decision taken in 1920 is indirectly linked with the deep-rooted problems that the company is now facing.

Today, Philips will announce an estimated loss of 4 billion guilders (£1.2 billion) for last year, essentially the price for years of complacency and mediocrity.

The exact size of the loss matters little, since most of it is accounted for by the £1.45 billion restructuring programme instigated by Jan Timmer, the Philips president. The changes are intended to reduce the company's hyper-diversified activities and workforce. The question is whether Mr Timmer's are swinging too late, can Philips

restructure its way out of the group be torn to pieces? Philips' fundamental problem lies in its haphazard diversification and management deficiencies. Working for Philips used to be considered an attractive alternative to the Dutch civil service, a mentality that gripped the company's managers. Unlike their competitors from Japan, America or Germany, Philips was well protected from the realities of financial markets. While this was good for research and development, Philips failed to cash in on the ideas generated by its scientists. Although Philips invented audio and compact discs, the Japanese sell most of them.

Philips is Europe's second largest electronics company after Siemens, producing a bewildering range of products, including toasters, electric razors, light bulbs, computers

and electronic chips. In short, anything that can be plugged into a socket. However, with the exception of records, made by Polygram, its 80 per cent owned subsidiary, and light bulbs, the company lags behind competition.

Philips' biggest disasters have been in electronic components and computers. The group's selling computer business, which incurred losses of several million guilders in 1989, was up for sale last year, but there were no bidders because of the difficult position that most of Philips' larger European competitors

are in at present. Even greater losses were incurred at the components division. The business, which amounted to 15 per cent of sales in 1989, suffers from high investment at low return, while facing tough competition from Japan. Mr Timmer is forging links with competitors in an effort to protect the hard core of the business, which is strategically important, particularly on the consumer electronics side.

Consumer electronics, the largest subsidiary, accounting for more than 40 per cent of sales, is the most profitable.

Philips' production costs, however, compare unfavourably with those of Japanese rivals Sony and Matsushita (Panasonic), an imbalance that is ironed out mainly by EC tariffs on East Asian imports. But import tariffs, assuming a successful outcome of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks, are likely to fall during this decade.

Philips' net profit margins, 2.4 per cent in 1989, and much lower in 1990 even without provisions, are the lowest among the world's largest electronic companies. In some ways, Philips is comparable to Siemens, the German electronics group that suffered similar problems in the late Seventies. In the Eighties, Siemens restructured its operations into a few core divisions. Although Siemens' difficulties were never quite as deep, the exercise took almost ten years. Philips does not have that kind of time. Nor does it have the funds.

While Siemens had, and to some degree still has, a considerable cash mountain, Philips was highly geared, at 90 per cent of shareholders' funds, at the end of 1989. Mr Timmer's restructuring programme is not a simple cost-cutting exercise. If it is to succeed, it must lead to a reduction in the number of business divisions, and a substantial rethink of production policy. That said, if Philips was to concentrate on consumer products and light bulbs, it would be exposed to the most competitive end of the electronics market. This is the company's chief dilemma.

This year, Philips will celebrate its 100th anniversary. Amid the celebrations, 50,000 of its employees, one in six, will lose their jobs. The days when Philips was a simple light bulb factory are long gone, but it is by no means a coincidence that light bulbs remain one of the company's few healthy operations. The history of Philips may yet turn full circle.

WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
European Business Correspondent

Insurers make a big mistake

THE big insurers would like to blame their appalling performance last year on the weather, but the numbers do not add up. Commercial Union's 99 per cent fall in profits to £1.4 million, and General Accident's record loss of £121 million after a £147 million profit in 1989, were caused by more deep-rooted problems than a couple of storms and a dry summer.

Discounting claims for storm damage and subsidence, and the cost of reinsurance renewals, CU would have made a £99 million profit in the year, while GA would still have suffered a £10 million loss.

The slump in profits was caused at both companies by their general insurance business in Britain. At CU, the underwriting loss grew from £8.1 million to £145 million, while GA's grew 127 per cent to £462 million. Motor claims soared, while CU paid out on 53,000 thefts at an average £600. There was also a sharp increase in arson attacks on commercial property, a common phenomenon during a recession.

The multitude of excuses for the underwriting losses boil down to a single fundamental error. CU and GA, along with the other main insurers, wrote too many bad risks too cheaply in an attempt to preserve market share. Both now claim to have repented and are planning to increase premiums. If they do, it could have a miraculous effect on

their bottom lines by 1992.

The slump in Britain has unfortunately masked a number of improvements. CU's American business returned to profit, while GA finally seems to have brought NZI Bank in New Zealand under control, as its loss fell 87 per cent to £6.3 million.

Analysts predict only modest recovery at both companies this year, with CU making perhaps £65 million, and GA maybe £15 million. Healthy dividend increases put CU, at 52p a share, on a current yield of 5.9 per cent and GA, trading at 54p, on 6.5 per cent. Recovery prospects are fully accounted for in the price.

Lasmo

AS ONE of the world's purest plays on the price of oil, Lasmo shares have yo-yoed from 360p to 502p and back to 366p in the past year. Who, though, six months ago, would have predicted that oil prices would collapse on the outbreak of war and rise when peace was imminent?

Contemptuous of gut responses to oil price volatility, Lasmo has meanwhile got on with the business of running a business. Last year net profits rose from £61.1 million to £83.1 million and earnings from 15.8p a share to 21.1p.

More significantly, cashflow from operations after tax rose from £147 million to £234 million.

Only a relatively small proportion of this increase can be attributed to higher average oil prices, which in sterling terms rose by just 15 per cent to £12.32 a barrel.

Cashflow all but covered capital expenditure of £253 million, which rose by £100 million. The market's perception is that Lasmo had a poor year with the drill bit, but the company tapped 149 new oil and gas wells. These will contribute to future cashflow, and oil and gas reserves rose again, even after record production of 86,100 barrels per day of oil-equivalent.

Gearing of just 7 per cent means that a 13 per cent increase in the dividend to 8.5p a share can be repeated this year even if oil prices weaken and earnings are static. Enterprise Oil offers a higher yield but Lasmo is good value for long-term oil price bulls.

Cityvision

MORTGAGE rate cuts, a lower base rate, and increasing hopes of an end to the Gulf war, all on one day. Could a consumer company like Cityvision ask for anything more? Well, yes, actually, abolition

of the poll tax would do the video film rental group a power of good.

Pre-tax profits for the year ended November 30 at £16.4 million, up from £12.5 million, on a 71 per cent increase in turnover to £78.4 million, show there was life in the video market for at least part of last year. But the results mask a deterioration in the second half, which continued into the first six weeks of this financial year, so it may be 1992 before profits really move forward.

Earnings improved only from 7.07p to 7.75p a share after the one-for-six rights issue last March. The group is, however, cash positive and cash generative, and yesterday expanded its chain to 854 outlets with the £2.4 million cash purchase of The Video Store Group. The deal brings 46 stores and £4.5 million of turnover.

Cityvision claims a 20 per cent share of the British video rental market, and believes it can win more. The public still rents roughly a million videos a day, and a £10 million industry advertising campaign to promote renting can only benefit Cityvision.

Profits could reach £19 million this year, and possibly £21.5 million next year. At 50p, the shares trade on prospective ratings of 6.8 and 5.6, respectively. But best wait for poll tax developments before buying aggressively.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Supporting role for Ronnie

RONNIE Jacobson, one of the most colourful stockbrokers in the Square Mile, is stepping down as a partner of Jacobson Townsley, the firm he has run with Barry Townsley for the past 15 years. Jacobson, a snappy dresser who has seen the best part of 30 companies to the market, steps down at the end of April, but will not be breaking all his financial ties. "I am retiring from the partnership but will remain a consultant to the firm on the corporate finance side," says Jacobson, aged 52. "I hope to continue to haunt the City for many years to come." A fan of Tottenham Hotspur for 45 years - he even holds shares in the club, to the dismay of Townsley, who has long supported Arsenal - Jacobson denies he may bail Spurs out of financial difficulties. "I'll support them by going to their games and even taking up rights if necessary," says Jacobson, who hopes to pursue new interests in music, the theatre... and sport.

NIGEL Lawson, the former Chancellor, dealt in billions of pounds when handling the nation's wealth, but it appears he can be canny when it comes to his own money. Nesta Wyn Ellis, his biographer, claims he once handed his barber a 50p tip after having a £15 haircut. The barber, noticing he had

been given an Irish coin, decided to point this fact out. "Oh, put it in a parking meter," Lawson replied airily, and left.

Nash makes cash

TREVOR Tarring, chairman of Metal Bulletin, the publishing group that reports next week, knows a good investment when he sees one. His private portfolio includes one Frazer Nash 1.5 litre sports touring car, one of which he bought 33 years ago for the princely sum of £100. Today it is worth more than £50,000 and there is no shortage of potential buyers. Tarring, a dedicated vintage car enthusiast who also has a half share in a 1908 11.5 litre Napier racer, restored the car himself and even makes spare parts that are not readily available. He is busy restoring a 1929

Austin Seven for his daughter Emma - a generous gesture, considering she once rolled one of his prized Nash cars, putting it out of action for several months. "I thought it would be better if she drove her own car," he jokes.

WORD that Norman Lamont hopes to go to the cinema on Budget day has captured the imagination of film buffs in the City. The list of films he may care to see now includes High Noon, Apocalypse Now, Tango and Cash and The Money Pit. The Color of Money is a favoured candidate, but less optimistic tips include Reversal of Fortune, The Sting and The Man who Fell To Earth.

Trial by noise

THE persistent sound of drilling caused an expensive two-hour interruption to proceedings of the Blue Arrow trial in Chancery Lane, London, yesterday. After saying that the noise was making it impossible for him to continue, Justice McKinnon retired, as he put it, to find out "what the hell was going on". The irate judge reappeared 45 minutes later to announce that an arcade was being built next door. He adjourned the court until 2pm. To the collective horror of the press corps, whose members are having a tough time staying awake as it is, lunch will be taken at midday in future and court

will resume at 1pm to enable the necessary drilling to take place before the midday break. However, Justice McKinnon's negotiating skills - along with his sense of humour - were called into question later in the afternoon when the drilling resumed.

Called to account

A LETTER sent by Coutts & Co to its largely aristocratic clientele, giving warning that current account charges are about to rise, could be far more effective than the bank intended. From next month, they will have to keep £3,000 in their current account to avoid quarterly charges of £30 plus 75p per entry. One outraged customer and City Diary reader, who has the best part of £200,000 in his Coutts deposit account, has decided to change banks rather than comply with these new requirements. "If you think of it in terms of £3,000 at 13.5 per cent, that means it will cost me about £405 a year just to keep that sum in my current account." He is, nevertheless, amused by the explanatory notes to the letter, which read: "We are giving great attention to reducing still further the number of customers looked after by each manager and his team." The customer adds: "By jove, they jolly well are..."

JON ASHWORTH



TWELVE MONTHS' UNAUDITED REVIEW

Dividend increase 7%

★ Operating profit of £1.4m despite exceptionally difficult trading conditions in the United Kingdom and other major non-life markets.

★ Underlying increases of 13% in life profits and 20% in life premiums.

★ First quarter storms cost £55m and property subsidence claims £47m.

★ Good profit contribution from the Netherlands and improved result in the United States.

HIGHLIGHTS		
	12 months 1990 Unaudited	12 months 1989 Audited
Premium income	£3,596m	£3,525m
Operating profit before taxation	£1.4m	£150.5m
Profit attributable to shareholders (note)	£22.2m	£173.9m
Earnings per share	3p	21.7p
Dividend per share	23.0p	21.5p
Shareholders' funds	£1,235m	£1,708m

Note: Profit attributable to shareholders includes realised investment gains after taxation of £20.8m (1989 £81.9m).

The proposed final dividend of 14.0p per share will be paid on 17 May 1991 to shareholders on the register at the close of business on 21 March 1991. The proposed final dividend will cost £60.0m (1989 £56.9m). Shareholders will be offered the choice of receiving fully paid ordinary shares, rather than cash, in respect of all or part of the final dividend. Details will be circulated to shareholders on 3 April 1991.

This announcement does not constitute full group accounts for the year. Copies of the full group accounts, which have not yet been reported on by the auditors, will be circulated to shareholders on 21 March 1991 and delivered to the Registrar of Companies after approval at the Annual General Meeting which will be held on 16 April 1991. Members of the public may obtain copies of the accounts after 21 March from Commercial Union plc, Shareholder Relations Service, St Helen's, 1 Undershaft, London EC3P 3DQ (telephone: 071-383 7500 ext. 8860).



Commercial Union plc

[illegible]

1989/91		Price		Gross		Vol		P/E		1989/91		Price		Gross		Vol		P/E	
High	Low	Bid	Offer	Change	%	Bid	Offer	Change	%	High	Low	Bid	Offer	Change	%	Bid	Offer	Change	%
74	81	74	81							228	232	228	232						
75	82	75	82							175	178	175	178						
76	83	76	83							176	179	176	179						
77	84	77	84							177	180	177	180						
78	85	78	85							178	181	178	181						
79	86	79	86							179	182	179	182						
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82	89	82	89							182	185	182	185						
83	90	83	90							183	186	183	186						
84	91	84	91							184	187	184	187						
85	92	85	92							185	188	185	188						
86	93	86	93							186	189	186	189						
87	94	87	94							187	190	187	190						
88	95	88	95							188	191	188	191						
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92	99	92	99							192	195	192	195						
93	100	93	100							193	196	193	196						
94	101	94	101							194	197	194	197						
95	102	95	102							195	198	195	198						
96	103	96	103							196	199	196	199						
97	104	97	104							197	200	197	200						
98	105	98	105							198	201	198	201						
99	106	99	106							199	202	199	202						
100	107	100	107							200	203	200	203						
101	108	101	108							201	204	201	204						
102	109	102	109							202	205	202	205						
103	110	103	110							203	206	203	206						
104	111	104	111							204	207	204	207						
105	112	105	112							205	208	205	208						
106	113	106	113							206	209	206	209						
107	114	107	114																

Exchange index compared with 1985 was down at 93.8 (day's range 93.8-94.0).

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES													
Mid Rate for Feb 27		Range	Close	1 month	3 month								
New York	1.9135-1.9215		1.9155-1.9185	1.00-1.10p	2.90-2.98p								
Monro	2.1985-2.2125		2.1975-2.2025	0.71-0.85p									
London	1.9135-1.9215		1.9155-1.9185	1.00-1.10p	2.90-2.98p								
Brussels	55.82-56.04		55.82-56.04	10p-11p	55-59p								
Copenhagen	11.644-11.6504		11.644-11.6504	2p-3p	7p-7p								
Frankfurt	1.001-1.0015		1.001-1.0015	2p-3p	7p-7p								
Paris	2.9158-2.9208		2.9158-2.9198	1p-1p	2p-2p								
Lisbon	252.81-252.85		252.81-252.85	1p-1p	2p-2p								
Madrid	182.1-182.18		182.1-182.18	2p-3p	7p-7p								
Milan	217.18-219.01		217.18-217.14	2p-3p	7p-7p								
Stockholm	11.3533-11.3541		11.3533-11.3541	2p-3p	7p-7p								
Oslo	1.851-1.8515		1.851-1.8515	2p-3p	7p-7p								
Osaka	10.6148-10.6815		10.6148-10.6817	1p-1p	2p-2p								
Tokyo	253.25-253.27		253.25-253.27	1p-1p	2p-2p								
Zurich	253.25-253.27		253.25-253.27	1p-1p	2p-2p								
Zurich	253.25-253.27		253.25-253.27	1p-1p	2p-2p								
Source: <i>Eurol</i>													
MONETARY RATES (%)													
Base Rate: Clearing Banks 15 Finance Base 14													
Discount Market Office: Night High 13% Low 12 Week float 13%													
Prime Rate (Mid-Spot): 2m 12% 3m 12% 6m 12% 9m 12% 12m 11% 11%													
1 month	2 month	3 month	6 month	12 month									
Prime Bank Bill (Mid):	13p-12p	12p-12p	12p-12p	11p-11p									
Trade Bills (Mid):	13p-12p	12p-12p	12p-12p	11p-11p									
Interbank:	13p-12p	13p-12p	12p-12p	12p-12p									
(Overnight open up day, close 12p)	13p-12p	n/a	12p-12p	12p-12p									
Leasing/Finance Rates:	13p-12p	12p-12p	12p-12p	12p-12p									
Starting Costs:	6.85-6.90	6.83-6.87	6.77-6.82	6.77-6.82	6.57-6.62								
Building Society Cash:	12p-13p	13p-12p	12p-12p	12p-12p	11p-11p								
EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)													
Currency	7 day	1 month	3 month	6 month	Call								
Germany	7.40p	7.40p	7.40p	7.40p	6p-5p								
Denmark	9.9p	9p-9p	9p-9p	9p-9p	8p-7p								
France	9p-9p	9p-9p	9p-9p	9p-9p	8p-8p								
Italy	9p-9p	9p-9p	9p-9p	9p-9p	8p-8p								

1989/91		Price		Gross Yld		1989/91		Price		Gross Yld			
High	Low	Bid	Offer	%	P/E	High	Low	Bid	Offer	%	P/E		
129	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
130	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
131	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
132	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
133	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
134	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
135	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
136	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
137	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
138	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
139	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
140	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
141	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
142	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
143	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
144	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
145	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
146	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
147	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
148	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
149	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
150	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
151	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
152	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
153	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
154	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
155	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
156	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
157	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
158	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
159	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
160	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
161	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2
162	100	176	182	12	30.7	42	135	104	106	4	6.7	6.4	21.2

LONDON FOX				LONDON OIL REPORTS (ICR-LOW) - London (Lopon)			
COFFEE				Bullish American stock figures helped to firm up prices, while the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait continued.			
Mar	525-504	Mar	522-519	CRUDE OIL (Brent/Port)			
Apr	521-520	May	542-541	Brnt Physical	18.50	+0.55	
May	530-530	Jun	538-537	Brnt 15 day (May)	18.30	+0.40	
Jun	560-559	Jul	568-567	Brnt 30 day (May)	17.95	+0.55	
Jul	570-569	Aug	578-577	W Texas Intermediate (Apr)	18.75		
Aug	576-575	Sep	584-583	W Texas Intermediate (May)	78.30	+0.50	
Sep	582-581	Oct	590-589				
Oct	588-587	Nov	596-595				
Nov	594-593	Dec	602-601				
Dec	608-607	Jan	614-613				
Jan	614-613	Feb	620-619				
Feb	626-625	Mar	627-626				
Mar	632-631	Apr	633-632				
Apr	639-638	May	645-644				
May	645-644	Jun	651-650				
Jun	651-650	Jul	657-656				
Jul	663-662	Aug	663-662				
Aug	669-668	Sep	675-674				
Sep	675-674	Oct	681-680				
Oct	687-686	Nov	687-686				
Nov	693-692	Dec	699-698				
Dec	705-704	Jan	705-704				
Jan	711-710	Feb	717-716				
Feb	723-722	Mar	729-728				
Mar	735-734	Apr	741-740				
Apr	747-746	May	753-752				
May	759-758	Jun	765-764				
Jun	771-770	Jul	777-776				
Jul	783-782	Aug	789-788				
Aug	795-794	Sep	801-800				
Sep	807-806	Oct	813-812				
Oct	819-818	Nov	825-824				
Nov	831-830	Dec	837-836				
Dec	843-842	Jan	849-848				
Jan	855-854	Feb	861-860				
Feb	867-866	Mar	873-872				
Mar	879-878	Apr	885-884				
Apr	891-890	May	897-896				
May	903-902	Jun	909-908				
Jun	915-914	Jul	921-920				
Jul	927-926	Aug	933-932				
Aug	939-938	Sep	945-944				
Sep	951-950	Oct	957-956				
Oct	963-962	Nov	969-968				
Nov	975-974	Dec	981-980				
Dec	987-986	Jan	993-992				
Jan	999-998	Feb	1005-1004				
Feb	1011-1010	Mar	1017-1016				
Mar	1023-1022	Apr	1029-1028				
Apr	1035-1034	May	1041-1040				
May	1047-1046	Jun	1053-1052				
Jun	1059-1058	Jul	1065-1064				
Jul	1071-1070	Aug	1077-1076				
Aug	1083-1082	Sep	1089-1088				
Sep	1095-1094	Oct	1101-1100				
Oct	1107-1106	Nov	1113-1112				
Nov	1119-1118	Dec	1125-1124				
Dec	1131-1130	Jan	1137-1136				
Jan	1143-1142	Feb	1149-1148				
Feb	1155-1154	Mar	1161-1160				
Mar	1167-1166	Apr	1173-1172				
Apr	1179-1178	May	1185-1184				
May	1191-1190	Jun	1197-1196				
Jun	1203-120						

Portfolio PLATINUM

From your Portfolio Platinum card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add them up to give you your overall total and check this against the daily dividend figure. If it matches you have won outright or a share of the daily prize money stand-off. If you win, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No.	Company	Group	Gain or Loss
1	Shell (L)	Paper/Petrol Adv	
2	Boat (H)	Building Roads	
3	Life Service	Motors/Aircraft	
4	Land Chan	Bank/Discount	
5	Manfred	Breweries	
6	Radio City	Motors/Aircraft	
7	Spain Dis	Industrial A-D	
8	Union Dis	Bank/Discount	
9	Moravia (N)	Food	
10	Norwich	Food	
11	Cher Alka	Bank/Discount	
12	Midland	Bank/Discount	
13	Victor	Industrial A-D	
14	ISA Int	Industrial A-D	
15	Barlow Rand	Industrial A-D	
16	Microgen	Electricals	
17	Royal Telecom	Electricals	
18	Dalry	Food	
19	Liberty Group	Building Roads	
20	Freemove	Industrial A-D	
21	Beulah	Industrial A-D	
22	St Pauline	Industrial A-D	
23	Water	Water	
24	Thames Water	Water	
25	Blindown	Food	
26	Davy	Industrial A-D	
27	Bowyer	Industrial A-D	
28	Hardy O & G	Oil/Gas	
29	RMC Gp	Building Roads	
30	Seven Trust	Water	
31	Scotcor	Industrial A-D	
32	Anglian Water	Water	
33	Chelston (B)	Transport	
34	BOC	Electricals	
35	Park Foods	Food	
36	British Gas	Oil/Gas	
37	BAA	Transport	
38	Rotork	Industrial A-D	
39	Hayward Williams	Building Roads	
40	War	Industrial A-D	
41	Nichols (N)	Food	
42	Bridon	Industrial A-D	
43	Locken	Motors/Aircraft	
44	Fisher (L)	Transport	

Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend
Please make a note of your daily totals for the weekly dividend of £2,000 in Saturday's newspaper.

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Dividend							

The £2,000 Portfolio Platinum prize was won yesterday by Mr Thomas Browning of Great Barford, Bedfordshire.

BRITISH FUNDS

SHORTS (Under Five Years)	Gain or Loss
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FIVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS	Gain or Loss
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OVER FIFTEEN YEARS	Gain or Loss
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UNDATED	Gain or Loss
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INDEX-LINKED	Gain or Loss
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BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

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STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

Shares close at day's highs

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began February 25. Dealings end March 8. Contango day March 11. Settlement day March 18. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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Company	Price	Change
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High	Low	Company	Net	Offer	Open	%	P/E
13	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
14	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
15	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
16	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
17	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
18	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
19	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
20	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
21	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
22	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
23	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
24	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
25	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
26	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
27	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
28	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
29	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
30	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
31	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
32	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
33	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2
34	10 1/2	IBM	72	70 1/2	13	15	26 1/2

Court of Appeal

Law Report February 28 1991

Chancery Division

Power to determine validity of subordinate legislation

Chief Adjudication Officer and Another v Foster
Before Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Beldam and Lord Justice Nolan
[Judgment February 21]

A social security commissioner, exercising his appellate jurisdiction, had no power to determine questions as to the validity of subordinate legislation in the form of regulations.

The Court of Appeal so held (the Master of the Rolls dissenting in part) allowing an appeal by the Secretary of State for the Department of Social Security against the decision of Mr R. A. Sanders, a social security commissioner, that paragraphs 13(2)(a)(ii) and 13(2)(a)(iii) of Schedule 2 to the Income Support (General) Regulations (SI 1987 No 1967) were ultra vires section 22 of the Social Security Act 1986, as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1988, and that in consequence the applicant, Miss Rosemary Foster, was entitled to a severe disability premium.

Mr John Laws and Mr Christopher Kaitowski for the secretary of state; Mr Richard Drabble and Mr Mark Rowland for Miss Foster.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS, considering the jurisdiction of the commissioner, said that it stemmed exclusively from section 101 of the Social Security Act 1975, as amended by the Health and Social Security Act 1984 and the Social Security Act 1986. It empowered him to determine whether a decision of

the social security appeal tribunal was "erroneous in point of law".

The Act had to be construed as a whole and his Lordship referred to the other appellate provisions and in particular to section 96 where the same phrase occurred in respect of a review power conferred on the secretary of state in respect of his own decisions on question arising, *inter alia*, under specified regulations made pursuant to the Act.

If "erroneous in point of law" was an inappropriate phrase to confer jurisdiction on him to consider, and still more to decide, whether his own exercise of a regulation-making power was *intra vires*, as it surely must be, the same was likely to be true of the use of the phrase in section 101.

His Lordship fully accepted that under the statutory framework, if the commissioner had such power, so had each of the many hundreds of relatively junior adjudication officers.

The distinction between an appellate and a judicial review jurisdiction was well known and the latter was strictly confined to the High Court. It was not therefore to be expected that such jurisdiction would be conferred on those exercising a closed statutory appeals jurisdiction in the absence of clear words.

The right of appeal from the commissioner to the Court of Appeal, conferred by section 14 of the Social Security Act 1980, was confined to an appeal on a question of law from any decision of the commissioner. Undoubtedly the section gave the court jurisdiction to decide

on the limits of the commissioner's jurisdiction, but applying general principles and section 15(3) of the Supreme Court Act 1981, it did not enable the court to decide on the validity of the relevant regulations.

However, the court had a quasi-original jurisdiction in relation to judicial review. *British Airways Board v Laker Airways Ltd* [1984] QB 142 demonstrated that procedures existed whereby either party, at some expense and waste of time, could have brought the present issue of the validity of the sub-paragraphs before the court contemporaneously with the hearing of an appeal against the commissioner's exercise of his jurisdiction.

Since the court, unlike the commissioner, had jurisdiction to determine that issue and as it had inherent jurisdiction to determine its own procedures, it was entitled in appropriate, if rare cases, of which the present was one, to consider and decide a judicial review issue which was relevant to an appeal before it, notwithstanding that the issue could not be raised in the court below.

Lord Justice Beldam delivered a concurring judgment on that point and Lord Justice Nolan agreed.

Their Lordships, however, went on to hold that paragraphs 13(2)(a)(ii) and (iii) were *intra vires*, the Master of the Rolls dissenting from that part of their judgments.

Solicitors: Solicitor, Department of Social Security; Mr Nicholas J. Warren, Birkenhead.

Unilateral double taxation relief available

G. C. A. International Ltd v Yates (Inspector of Taxes) v G. C. A. International Ltd
[Judgment February 12]

Unilateral double taxation relief was available to a United Kingdom company in respect of a charge to tax imposed in Venezuela on 90 per cent of the total gross receipts from an international contract.

For the purposes of the relief provided for by section 498 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970, Venezuela was a "corresponding" country to the United Kingdom for the purposes of the relief. However, the amount of the credit available did not extend to the whole of the charge but only to that part that was imposed on the company's remuneration for operations actually carried out by it in Venezuela.

Mr Justice Scott so held in the Chancery Division in dismissing an appeal by the taxpayer company, G. C. A. International Ltd, and a cross-appeal by the Crown from a determination of a special commissioner that

gave credit for foreign tax paid by the company but limited it to the amount attributable to the income arising in Venezuela.

The taxpayer company, a United Kingdom company, contracted to carry out a rehabilitation study of three oil wells in Venezuela for a Venezuelan company. The terms of the contract allocated part of the remuneration to the work to be done in Venezuela and part to work in the United Kingdom.

Under Venezuelan law the taxpayer company had to pay tax in Venezuela at a flat rate on 90 per cent of the gross receipts payable under the contract.

There being no double taxation agreement with Venezuela, the taxpayer company claimed relief against United Kingdom corporation tax under the provisions of section 498 in respect of the total tax payable by it in Venezuela.

A tax inspector refused the claim on the ground that none of the Venezuelan tax paid satisfied the conditions in section 498(3) and (6).

Section 498 of the 1970 Act (now section 790 of the Income

and Corporation Taxes Act 1988) makes provision for unilateral relief in the absence of double taxation arrangements by allowing the foreign tax as a credit against United Kingdom income or corporation tax.

Section 498 provides: "(3) Credit for tax paid under the law of the territory outside the United Kingdom and computed by reference to income arising in that territory shall be allowed against any United Kingdom income tax or corporation tax computed by reference to that income...."

"(6) In this section... references to tax payable or paid under the law of a territory outside the United Kingdom include only references to taxes which are charged on income and correspond to income tax or corporation tax in the United Kingdom...."

Mr Michael Flesch, QC and Mr Ian Richards for the taxpayer company; Mr Christopher McCall, QC, for the Crown.

MR JUSTICE SCOTT said that the sums at stake were small. However, the Crown wanted clarification as to the

application of the provisions and had agreed to bear the costs of the appeal.

The Crown argued that the Venezuelan tax, being charged on 90 per cent of gross receipts, was in effect a turnover tax that did not "correspond" to income or corporation tax in the United Kingdom for the purposes of section 498(6).

The commissioner had disagreed holding that the Venezuelan tax did correspond. But he upheld the Crown's alternative argument that the amount of the credit available was to be limited to the corporation tax attributable to the item of income arising in Venezuela.

The commissioner's decision was correct. There were obvious difficulties in getting full tax returns from foreign taxpayers. That difficulty was dealt with in the Venezuelan tax code by simply providing for 10 per cent to be deducted from gross receipts to produce "net profit".

The 10 per cent might represent an understatement of the costs to the company of carrying on its business. But unless it was said that no foreign tax expressed as a charge on a percent

age of gross receipts could for section 498 purposes "correspond" to United Kingdom income tax or corporation tax, it was not practicable to permit any particular deduction to be criticised on the ground that it did not represent the level of expenses incurred on carrying on the business.

The intention was to charge tax on net profits and to that extent, adopting a broad brush approach, the Venezuelan charge served the same function as corporation tax.

The question of what part of the remuneration was income arising in Venezuela had to be decided under English law and not Venezuelan law. Where it had to be asked, did the operations take place from which the profits arose?

Remuneration from an international contract could be regarded as arising in two places. Common sense required that an apportionment be made. There could be no objection to the commissioner apportioning the amounts allocated by the contract for the purposes of the taxpayer company's claim for relief.

Solicitors: Wedlake Saint, Solicitor of Inland Revenue.

Damages in breach of repairing covenant

Calworth Estates Ltd v Society of Licensed Victuallers
Before Lord Justice Dillon, Lord Justice Butler-Sloss and Lord Justice Taylor
[Judgment February 15]

Where leased premises, on being handed back to the landlords at the expiration of the lease, were in a state of disrepair owing to breach of the repairing covenants, it did not follow from the fact that the landlords did not themselves intend to carry out repairs that they were entitled only to nominal damages for the breach.

The Court of Appeal so held, *inter alia*, in a reserved judgment when dismissing an appeal by the lessees, the Society of Licensed Victuallers, from Judge Peter Crawford, QC, who, sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division on February 26, 1990, had awarded the landlords, Calworth Estates Ltd, substantial damages for breach of repairing covenants.

Mr Peter Birt, QC, for the lessees; Miss Caroline Hutton for the landlords.

LORD JUSTICE DILLON said that the landlords sold the property shortly after the lease expired, and it was clear that they never had any intention of carrying out any repairs to the premises themselves. The measure of damages for

breach of a repairing covenant was the diminution in the value of the property for the purpose of the cost of repairs could be a guide: see for example, *Smiley v Townshend* [1950] 3 KB 311, 322 where Lord Justice Goff said: "It is plain that the repairs are not going to be done by the landlord, the cost of them is little or no guide to the diminution in value of the reversion, which may be nominal...."

But it did not follow that such diminution must be nominal in those circumstances. In *Dodd Properties Ltd v Canterbury City Council* [1968] 1 WLR 433, 436-437 Lord Justice Donaldson said: "If [the plaintiff] reasonably intends to sell the property in its damaged state, clearly the diminution in capital value is the true measure of damage. If he reasonably intends to continue to occupy it and to repair the damage, clearly the cost of the repair is the true measure."

Although that case was concerned with the measure of damages for damage to property in tort, there was no reason why the same test should not apply in circumstances which arose from breach of contract.

Lord Justice Butler-Sloss and Lord Justice Taylor agreed. Solicitors: Hunters; Richard Bray & Co.

Semantic dissection in cases of discretion not appropriate

Corfu Navigation Co and Another v Mobil Shipping Co Ltd and Others
Before Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Dillon and Lord Justice Bingham
[Judgment February 20]

Semantic dissection of judicial reasoning, in cases where the court was exercising a wide discretion was not appropriate.

Thus in applications for security for costs under Order 23, rule 1 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, counsel should focus on the circumstances and the justice of the particular application in the light of the rule and its underlying principle.

The Court of Appeal so stated dismissing an appeal by Mobil Shipping Co Ltd from Mr Justice Saville who had refused an order Corfu Navigation Co, resident out of the jurisdiction, to provide security for costs of an action brought by it and Bain Clarkson Ltd, who were resident within the jurisdiction.

Mr Simon Gault for Mobil; Mr Michael Nolan for Corfu.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS said that whether and when orders for security for costs should be made had always been a matter of practice rather than of substantive law. It

could therefore change as circumstances changed. There had been a settled rule of practice that no order would be made against a foreign plaintiff if there were co-defendants resident in England.

His Lordship referred to the effect of the decisions in *Slazengers Ltd v Seaspeed Ferries International Ltd* [1987] 1 WLR 1187, QB; [1988] 1 WLR 221, CA.

Mr Gault had subjected the judgments of Mr Justice Webster at first instance and of Lord Justice Dillon and Lord Justice Bingham on the appeal to a minute semantic analysis designed to demonstrate that there was still a rule of practice that it was only where it was certain, virtually so, that the English plaintiff would become liable for all the costs if the defendants succeeded, that an order for security would not be made; and that where there was only a realistic possibility that the trial judge would order the English plaintiff to pay all the defendants' costs, an order for security would be made.

His approach and the assumptions of which it was based had, however, been contradicted on appeal in *Slazengers* where it had been made plain that the court's discretion was very wide and that account would be taken of

all the circumstances of the case. In a field in which there was some wide measure of discretion it was principles which mattered rather than the minutiae of the way the discretion had been exercised in particular cases or a fortiori of slightly different shades of meaning which could be distilled from the reasons given by different judges in different cases.

The basic principle underlying Order 23, rule 1(1)(a) was that it was *prima facie* unjust for a foreign plaintiff, who by virtue of his foreign residence was more or less immune to the consequences of a costs order against him, should be allowed to proceed without making funds available within the jurisdiction against which such an order could be executed.

His Lordship hoped that in future there would be no further semantic dissection of the reasons for the judgments in *Slazengers* and that arguments for and against orders for security would focus on the circumstances and justice of the particular case in the light of the wording of the rule and the underlying principle to which it sought to give effect.

Lord Justice Stocker and Lord Justice Butler-Sloss agreed. Solicitors: William A. Crump; Clyde & Co.

Acid house club device fails to achieve its object

Lunn v Colston-Hayter

A requirement by an organiser of a so-called acid house party that those attending should pay for purchasing their tickets no less than 24 hours in advance was merely a device designed to avoid the necessity of obtaining a licence required for public entertainment.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice Simon and Mr Justice Simon) held on February 6 in allowing an appeal brought by way of case stated by the prosecutor, David Charles Lunn on behalf of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council, against the dismissal by Maidenhead Justices on

November 28, 1989 of an information against the defendant, Anthony Charles Colston-Hayter, alleging an offence under section 1 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 of providing public entertainment without a licence from the authority. The case was remitted to the justices with a direction to convict.

MR JUSTICE SIMON said that it was impossible merely because of the existence of a formal scheme of club membership, enforced to the extent of requiring tickets to be obtained 24 hours in advance, to regard those who obtained such membership and tickets as having ceased to be members of the public.

Reports in arson

Regina v Allwright

In cases of arson it was always safer to ask for psychiatric reports before passing sentence on the offender.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Woolf, Mr Justice

Tudor-Evans and Mr Justice Wright) so held on February 14 in allowing an appeal by Alexander Allwright against a four-year sentence imposed at the Central Criminal Court (Mr Recorder Kelsall, QC) and reducing it to three years.

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LEGAL NOTICES

Continued from page 15

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

RE: THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

that a meeting of the creditors of the above named company will be held at

100, Old Street, London EC1Y 1SP

on Wednesday, 28th February 1991, at 10.00 o'clock in the forenoon.

The business day prior to the meeting.

In accordance with Rule 3.1(1) of the Insolvency Rules 1986, a creditor shall only be entitled to vote if

all details of any debt claimed are submitted to the Receiver in writing and the claim has been duly admitted no later than 12 noon on the business day prior to the meeting.

In a form of proxy to be lodged with the Receiver with the creditor's claim, the creditor shall be entitled to be represented at the meeting.

Claims and proxies should be submitted to the Receiver's office at 100, Old Street, London EC1Y 1SP, on or before 11 March 1991 at 10.00 am.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

RE: THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

● RACING 31
● GOLF 32
● CRICKET 33

SPORT

Dalglish spared further anxiety by US decision

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE stress that forced Kenny Dalglish into premature retirement will not be increased by any overture from the US Soccer Federation (USSF). While Dalglish's contemporary, Johan Cruyff, was recovering yesterday in a Spanish hospital following a mild heart attack — induced possibly by similar pressure to that which has forced Liverpool to search for a new manager — the USSF was announcing its intentions.

Both Dalglish and Franz Beckenbauer have been ruled out as possible successors to Bob Gansler as coach for the United States team, according to the USSF president, Alan Rothenberg. Gansler departed on Saturday, two days after the Americans had failed to score for the sixth successive match.

The favourite for the job of coaching the 1994 World Cup hosts is now Bora Milutinovic, the Yugoslav who coached Mexico at the 1986 World Cup and Costa Rica in the 1990 event, since when he has been out of work. Before that he had coached

Pumas to two Mexican League titles. He is fluent in Spanish, French, Russian and Serbo-Croatian and also speaks some English.

Beckenbauer, who coached West Germany to the World Cup title last summer, was thought to be the ideal choice, since he was an illustrious member of the New York Cosmos after leading West Germany to the 1974 World Cup title. Now technical director of Marseilles in France, the Kaiser was expected to become a consultant to the 1994 World Cup organizing committee. "But we never talked to him about coaching," Rothenberg said.

"That was never part of the equation. I don't think that's his best use. It's one thing to coach a national team like the Germans, where everything is organized and compressed and there's so much history. But it's another thing to come to our programme."

Dalglish, who managed Liverpool to Football League titles in 1988 and 1990, became available last Friday when he handed in his resignation, complaining of the pressure of the job. Gansler's subsequent exit fuelled speculation that the US had their successor lined up, only for the rumours to be dismissed by Rothenberg. "No, he's not a possibility," he said. Rothenberg will appoint the new coach, but a seven-man committee will narrow the field. John Kowalski, the coach of Robert Morris College and the US indoor team, will coach the national team on an interim basis.

The news from Barcelona might make Dalglish feel he is well out of the American post or any other for the time being. At nearly 40, the Scot is only three years younger than Cruyff, who had gone to the San Jordi surgical centre clinic on Tuesday complaining of chest pains. The Dutchman, who is in his third season as coach to Barcelona, was said yesterday to be suffering from "acute coronary insufficiency". He was undergoing a series of tests.

Barcelona are top of their league — just as Liverpool were when Dalglish surprised the football world by calling it a day. Success was clearly no escape from the intense pressure that has now caught up the three-time European Footballer of the Year who captained Netherlands to the World Cup final in 1974 and collected three European Cup winners' medals with Ajax from 1971-3.

Like Dalglish, who chose not to play for Scotland in the 1986 World Cup finals, Cruyff had opted out of the climax to the 1978 competition in Argentina because of the pressures. And only this week he was saying: "There is a time when you have been under a microscope and under pressure for 15 years and the stress begins to tell."

"It's at that moment that you realise you are struggling to sleep in the evenings and that the pressure is starting to affect your family. That is the moment to go."

He almost did so last season, which was so disappointing — relatively — that his future was in doubt. But Barcelona's revival — which has made them favourites to regain the league title from Real Madrid — brought Cruyff the offer of a new two-year contract, which he signed.

Golfer who chipped in for charity



All in a good cause: Greg Norman, of Australia, recently deposed as the world's No. 1 golfer by Nick Faldo, of Britain, follows the rule of thumb and the eagle-sharp eye at the 14th green in the Skins

match at the Doral Country Club in Miami yesterday. At the 18th, he won \$100,000 after a chip-off against Jack Nicklaus, Ray Floyd and Seve Ballesteros, and donated the money to charity.

Fallen idol Warnapura puts past behind him

FROM RICHARD STREETON IN KATUNAYAKA, SRI LANKA

BUNDULA Warnapura was a national cricketing idol in Sri Lanka nine years ago, when he captained his country in their inaugural Test match against England.

Later in the same year, Warnapura and his teammates incurred a 25-year ban from the Sri Lankan board from all cricket when he led an unofficial Sri Lankan side to South Africa. In his case, the ban was not finally lifted until last year and he was able to return to local club cricket. He saw his choice last weekend as an adjudicator as final acceptance by the board that the past was buried.

The future in Colombo when the Sri Lankans secretly left for South Africa was even greater, relatively, than in England when Gooch's party had earlier done the same thing.

Most of the players were dismissed from their jobs, and in South Africa their form proved so disappointing that a contracted second tour was cancelled. They learned about the 25-year ban two days before their opening fixture and for a long time could not accept that its severity was fact.

Once the initial shock passed, the players became resigned. On returning home they encountered little hostility from friends and even a measure of sympathy once it was realised that the English

rebels were banned from Test cricket for only three years and could continue with their countries.

"When cricket has been your whole life, it is a shattering experience not to be allowed to have anything to do with the game, be it at your club or even your children's school matches," Warnapura said. He even stopped attending matches as a spectator in case there were any incidents.

Warnapura admitted that he regretted his South African venture and would not go if he could turn back the clock. "My case was different from the others in several ways," he said. "I had a good job and the money was not the only reason I went. Generally, it was a harrowing experience and the mental anxiety and churning in my mind that it brought simply was not worth it."

Early in 1989, the International Cricket Conference, as it then was, introduced its own disciplinary code on players guilty of sporting contact with South Africa, and the Sri Lankan board made its first concession to the banned players. Twelve of the 14 could resume playing, but they could not be involved in the game's administration or management and were ineligible for representative selection.

Warnapura and Tony Opattha, the tour organiser, whose cricket has always been

ANC helps in unification of SA rugby

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

THE African National Congress has taken the lead in unifying the administration of rugby union in South Africa in a move which is expected to accelerate its readmittance to international competition.

Talks in Cape Town yesterday resulted in agreement to set a deadline of October 31 for the formation of a single non-political and non-racial controlling body. A steering committee has been formed to draft its constitution.

While the deadline also indicates that the chances of a foreign tour in the coming season are remote, it does allow the International Rugby Football Board (IRFB), which organises the World Cup, the chance to announce South Africa as possible hosts for the 1995 event.

The white South African Rugby Board (Sarb) had hoped that unity could be achieved by April 1, the start of the rugby season in South Africa, before its negotiations with the mainly Coloured (mixed race) South African Rugby Union (Saru) broke down earlier this year.

Dr Danie Craven, president of Sarb, who initiated unity talks in the first place, and

Ebrahim Patel, president of Saru, will serve on the committee. The new controlling body has been provisionally named the South African Rugby Football Union.

All existing controlling bodies will be disbanded to form a single organisation and all clubs will be open to all players, regardless of colour.

Most importantly, the steering committee was charged to disseminate the ideals of rugby at grass root level, which means that schools which have been unwilling to entertain the notion of mixed sport will have to think again. The government has introduced a complicated formula whereby school parent-teacher committees can decide whether to go multi-racial, but only a few hundred previously-white schools have so far voted to admit black pupils.

In Paris, the head of the French Rugby Federation, Albert Ferrasse, welcomed the merger of the two rugby bodies. "It will enable rugby to come out of its isolation and, given the importance of sport in South Africa, it will also be a help in destroying apartheid," he said.

Hudson proposes random testing

By PETER BILLS

RUGBY union authorities should instigate immediate random spot checks to ensure any drug problem is banished from the sport before it takes a hold, according to Tom Hudson, director of physical education and sports development at Bath University, and a former fitness adviser to the Llanelli and Bath rugby clubs.

Hudson says that testing must be widespread and the practice of taking tests only after matches. His plea comes in the wake of the two-year suspension imposed on Richard Griffiths, the Wales B player who tested positive last month.

Hudson said: "What is needed is stricter testing of rugby union players more often. Players are tested only after games, but if you have a clever coach or fitness adviser who wants to break the rules he can provide drugs which mask the effects of banned substances or even take a player off certain drugs in time."

He warned that the opening of doors to financial benefit for players in the game may tempt more to experiment with drugs.

"Players should be subjected to spot checks at training sessions because then they would not know when and where the next test would be. As the game gets a higher profile and finance becomes a factor, there will be more problems of this nature."

"I know there has been the suspicion in a number of union clubs that drugs were being taken by certain players but until now there has never been the hard evidence. We must make sure there is no expansion of this problem."

From his professional involvement at the university with young sportsmen generally, Hudson recognises that the supply of drugs has never been easier.

Oxford survive, page 32

Bailey may drive for Lotus as stand-in

By NORMAN HOWELL

JULIAN Bailey, of Britain, is on the verge of making a surprise return to Formula One motor racing for Lotus at the inaugural race of the new season in Phoenix on Sunday week.

Bailey has been testing the Lotus-Judd at Silverstone and is expected to sign a contract as stand-in driver for Martin Donnelly, who was badly injured in a crash last year. Johnny Herbert, who deputised for Donnelly in the last two races last season, was favoured to drive for Lotus alongside Mika Hakkinen, of Finland, until Donnelly recovered.

But Herbert, who is in Japan preparing for the Formula 3000 series there, has been unable to raise the money, an important point since Lotus, after losing Camel sponsorship at the end of last season, have had to look carefully at finances. Bailey is

thought to be able to bring some money to the team.

Peter Collins, the managing director of Lotus, would not be drawn on which of the two drivers would be selected. "The decision will be taken in the next 24 to 48 hours, but we are very much dependent on what our sponsors want," he said.

It is felt that Collins, who started in Formula One in 1978 at Lotus, before moving to Williams and then to Benetton, would like to favour Herbert, whom he introduced to grand prix racing two years ago in the Benetton, but that Bailey's money may swing the balance. Bailey raced in Formula One with Tyrrell before competing for the last two years with Nissan in the sportscar championship.

Bailey would be a popular choice with spectators as he is that rare breed who seems to be in Formula One because it is fun.

Platt wants Italian future

By CHRIS MOORE

DAVID Platt, the Aston Villa midfielder player, is the latest England international to confirm that his long-term future is likely to lie abroad. More specifically, Platt has expressed an interest in playing in Italy, where he came of age as an England player during last year's World Cup finals.

"I would eventually like the idea of putting myself against the best players in the world every week," Platt said. "If I was 27 now, I would be saying yes to Italy. I believe a move there would benefit my career."

"They have the best players. They pay the most money, more people watch them and the stadiums are better than anywhere else in the world."

However, Doug Ellis, the Villa chairman, yesterday pledged to do everything possible to keep Platt at Villa Park after his contract expires in 1993.

"Obviously, you build a team around certain players and you always want to keep them and add to that team. That is exactly what we are trying to do at Villa," Ellis

said. "We have David Platt under contract for another two-and-a-half years. We intend that he should stay at Villa for at least that long, and longer if possible."

Platt is Villa's top scorer this season with 17 goals, although he has been out of action for the last six weeks while struggling to shake off a groin injury.

He resumed training this week, but it is unlikely that he will be rushed straight back into the side for Saturday's visit to Sheffield United.

● The Leeds United left back, Peter Haddock, has been ruled out for the rest of the season after a knee-ligament operation. Haddock was carried off during his side's Rumbelows League Cup semi-final defeat by Manchester United at Elland Road on Sunday.

● Andy Thomas, the leading scorer for Plymouth Argyle this season, has been forced to end his playing career. Thomas, aged 28, has been sidelined by a back problem since October. He scored eight goals in 16 games at the start of the season.

BANK OF SCOTLAND BASE RATE

Bank of Scotland announces that with effect from Thursday 28th February 1991 its Base Rate has been decreased from 13.5% per annum to 13.0% per annum.

BANK OF SCOTLAND
A FRIEND FOR LIFE

Long decline in small-boat racing is reversed

By BARRY PICKTHALL

THE tide appears to have turned for dinghy sailors after a decade-long decline in small-boat racing. According to the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), which expects a record number of enthusiasts to make the pilgrimage to Crystal Palace this weekend for the annual Sailboat Exhibition, fleet numbers are showing a remarkable increase across the country.

Entries for several class championships are expected to nudge, and in the case of the Dart 18 and Laser classes, exceed the 200 mark — a number not witnessed since the heady dinghy days of the late Seventies.

This welcome increase is in

COMMENT

marked contrast to the world of offshore yacht racing, which is witnessing a marked decline, partially because of the recession but principally because of a general dislike for the extreme and costly yachts encouraged by the International Offshore Rule.

This year's Champagne Mumm Admiral's Cup event at Cowes, offshore racing's equivalent of a world championship, has attracted only nine countries against 19 national teams which competed in the 1975, '77 and '79 events.

Enrolments in the RYA's national dinghy tuition scheme also show a marked increase. During the past three years, numbers passing the introductory course have grown from 14,376 to 36,400. The increase is even more remarkable among improvers and advanced students, up three-and-a-half fold from 4,800 to 17,720.

A high percentage of those learning the ropes are children, for whom the RYA operates a special Young Opportunity scheme. This was introduced five years ago and involves several six-strong fleets of Optimist trainers which are available for hire with an instructor to schools and clubs in every region of the United Kingdom.

As a result, interest in this junior

class has blossomed with numbers at the national championship doubling from 102 in 1986 to 223 in 1989. The Jack Holt-designed Cadet primer has also enjoyed a similar revival, with entries for its championship climbing from 103 to 160 over the past four years.

Catamarans, this year's theme at Sailboat '91, is showing the biggest growth among dinghy classes. According to Peter Ewing, the first Dart 18 world championship taking place at Abersoch in July, which has a limited entry of 250 boats, is already well over-subscribed. There have been 204 entries from the UK alone, 40 of which have had to be

declined to make way for foreign contestants.

Rivalling the Dart for the top championship turnout this year will be the Laser class, which now numbers 140,000 worldwide. The class national championship at Mumbles in August could reach 300, 50 more than last year's record figure.

Last season this popular one-design class topped the championship league, ahead of the Optimist, Cadet, Fireball (133), Enterprise (130), Dart (120), Topper (126) and Lark (121), which made a welcome return to the 100 plus group for the first time since 1975.